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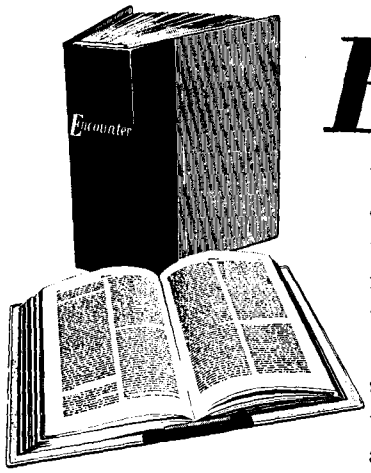

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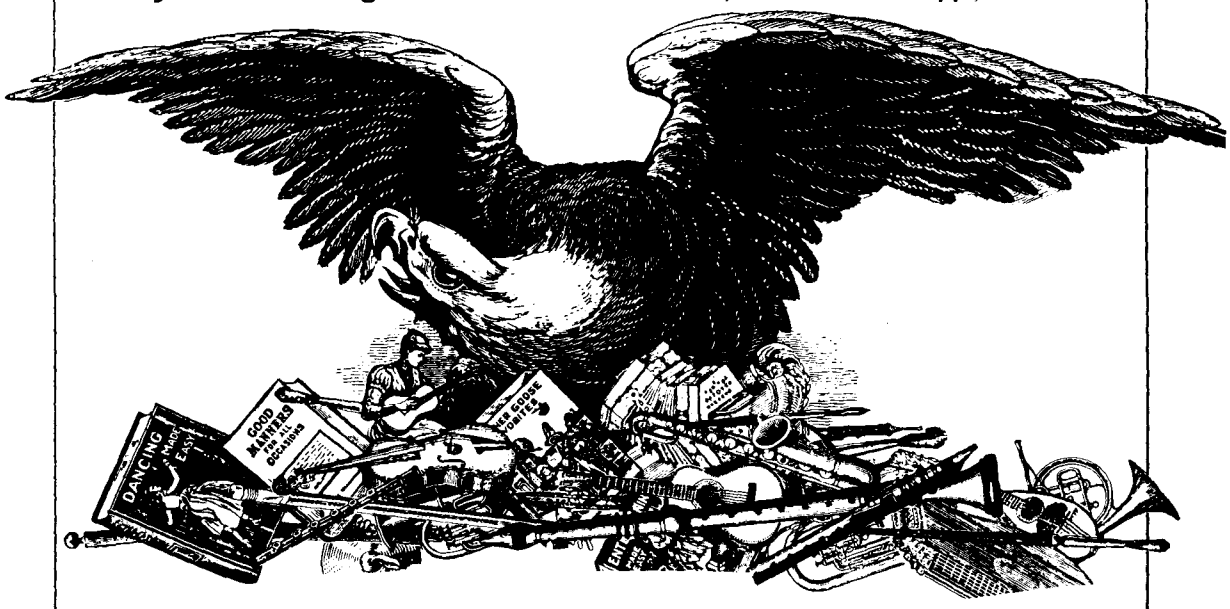

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Ruth Prawer Jhabvala

Commensurate Happiness

MARIE AND HUGHIE WERE cousins. On one side of their family—the side they had in common—they were of German-Jewish origin; the members of that family were mostly small and stocky, but they tended to marry tall, fair, fine-boned Anglo-Saxons. Marie and Hughie both sprang from such a combination, and they both took after the Anglo-Saxon side and were slim and blond and had difficulty getting shoes narrow enough to fit them.

Since their parents had a lot of divorces and personal crises, Marie and Hughie were mostly with their grandmother, Jeannette. They grew up in Jeannette's apartment, among all the heavy German furniture she had brought from the house she sold after her husband died. When Marie and Hughie sat playing together on the carpet, with all that furniture rearing and looming above them, they looked like two sprites, two changelings, fairy children in a forest; while Jeannette, who was short and squat with a long nose, watched over them like a benign witch. The apartment was so dark—it was on the Upper West Side, in a huge, ornate, turn-of-the-century block hemmed in by similar blocks—that often the chandeliers had to be kept on even during the day.

Jeannette, two generations earlier, had married her cousin. Unlike Marie and Hughie, they hadn't known each other as children because Otto had grown up in Germany. He had come to New York to join the branch of the family firm there and was soon expanding and reorganising it on an unprecedented scale. They had been a staid, dull firm, but Otto changed all that. He was able, energetic, and passionate. He didn't get married till he was nearly forty, and then, unlike everyone else, he didn't marry an Anglo-Saxon but Jeannette. Maybe because she loved him so terribly and was so constant and also fierce; fiercely possessive. After they were married, he continued to have affairs but, until Wanda, they were nothing much; anyway, their marriage lasted longer than the other, mixed ones, and they also had more children, and lived in a Greek Revival house on Eleventh Street that could take all the furniture and other possessions that he inherited from his side of the family as well as what she brought from hers.

Jeannette wanted and expected Hughie and Marie to get married; Marie wanted and expected it too; and Hughie just expected it. The only one of the three who was in a hurry was Jeannette. Marie knew that there were a whole lot of things Hughie still had to achieve before settling down, so she was glad to wait. She graduated from college, and then she took her Master's, and then—since Hughie still wasn't ready—she got a very interesting cultural job with the Asia Society. Hughie meanwhile began to be an architect but got impatient with the maths and physics part of it and switched to graphic art; and he travelled in Europe and in the Middle East and further east and Mexico; he tried many places. He also had many different kinds of friends whom he introduced neither to one another nor to Jeannette and Marie. Marie liked to think of him leading this very exciting life and coming home and telling her about it. She loved and admired him, for himself and everything he did.

Jeannette, his grandmother, tended to be more critical; sometimes very critical. When he changed courses again—from graphic art to art history—she asked for unreasonable explanations; and when he left in the middle of that to go on a trip to Spain with a friend, she quarrelled with him. Hughie was upset, and Marie, driving him to the airport, had to soothe him all the way and make excuses for Jeannette. And when she got home—stifling the feeling of sadness that overcame her

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whenever he left on one of his trips—she had to soothe Jeannette and make excuses for Hughie. But then Jeannette turned on Marie; she said she was spoiling Hughie by always giving in to his whims and even applauding them. Marie, a gentle girl with a lot of patience, couldn't help looking a bit superior (how little Jeannette understood her own grandson!); so that Jeannette, not at all gentle and still very short of patience in spite of her 70 years, became quite angry with her.

Next day Jeannette complained to Wanda. It was their day for having lunch together, and they met in their usual place, in the Palm Court at the Plaza. Although Wanda took an interest in Hughie and Marie—naturally, since she was almost family—she was not the best listener in the world, for her attention span was short and she tended to go off rather quickly on to some preoccupation of her own. This was very irritating to Jeannette. There were many, many things about Wanda that irritated Jeannette, but of course the wonder was that they could be this way together at all, having lunch. In this hotel too—the very place where Jeannette had first seen Wanda, over forty years ago.

When she looked up from where she now sat in the Palm Court over her lunch, Jeannette could see the staircase she had been descending on that occasion. She had just come from a committee meeting of the Lovers of the Opera and was walking down the stairs with other committee members—matrons like herself, in sober hats with veils—when she had caught sight of Wanda and Otto emerging from the cocktail lounge. Wanda, walking in front, drew many eyes beside Jeannette's: she was born to walk through hotel lobbies, balancing herself on heels like stilts, her small head with its crest of red hair held so high she couldn't possibly be aware of all the people looking at her. Otto was frowning rather anxiously as he followed her; he kept his eyes fixed on her round, high, little backside bobbing in front of him in electric blue silk, so he never looked up and was unaware he had been seen. He was balancing a little pile of flowered packages.

"He's got too much of his grandfather's money", Wanda said, when Jeannette complained to her about Hughie. "And no discipline. The young people in this country don't know what discipline means." Wanda had lived in America since the thirties, but she still spoke with a German accent and her opinions were often very German too. "It's ridiculous, taking all these courses. Art school, what's that? The school he should be attending is the school of life."

But what was the use of getting irritated with Wanda? Jeannette told herself. At least she was a person one could talk to about one's grandchildren and who listened, in between spearing bits of crab meat on her fork. Sometimes she extended this fork to Jeannette to let her taste; and Jeannette reciprocated by letting Wanda taste her chicken.

WHEN HE RETURNED from Spain—as always when he returned from a trip—Hughie gave a carefully edited, though lively and amusing, account to Jeannette and Marie; and the next day he went to see Wanda to tell her about it too. Only when he got there she had just fired her maid and was very upset at being left without one. She and the maid had had their argument in the middle of the latter's cleaning, and the furniture was still upside down just the way she had left it when she had stormed out. "Using such dirty words, I had no idea she was such a dirty person", Wanda complained to Hughie. She was sitting in the middle of all that upheaval, smoking furiously and trying to calm herself by laying out cards for solitaire.

Hughie began to tidy the apartment. He even completed some of the cleaning. It wasn't difficult to clean Wanda's apartment. It was the same place Otto had taken for her in the thirties and had the same pieces of furniture—the glass and steel tubes—that had been considered smart at that time. Wanda had never bothered to replace them; she had no interest in possessions other than clothes and personal ornaments.

"Darling, how sweet of you", she said absently, when she noticed what Hughie was doing.

"Have you had anything to eat?"

"To eat? Don't make me laugh. Not even a Nescafé—she went like that, shouting her dirty word, not worrying if I'm dying of hunger and thirst. And this a woman I've pampered for six months. Thank you, darling", she said, as Hughie gave her some coffee he had made in her kitchen along with some fancy but rather stale cookies he found out

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there. "Listen to me, sit here, close to Wanda: Jeannette's angry with you." And she made angry round eyes at Hughie to show him how angry his grandmother was. "She told me about it at lunch. I had quite a big job to calm her down, I can tell you. But I spoke up for you, you should have heard me."

"What was it about?" Hughie asked, though making a show of being more interested in her game of solitaire than in what she was saying.

"What is it ever about, with your grandmother? She is just an angry woman by nature. I'm the one and only person in this world who knows how to manage her. With tact and psychology", she said, frowning at her cards, though when Hughie tried to place one for her, she slapped his wrist.

Wanda had always prided herself on her tact and psychology in dealing with Jeannette. Shortly after Jeannette had had her unexpected glimpse of Wanda in the Plaza, she had a phone call from her. Wanda spoke just the way Jeannette had expected—in a German accent that came from deep down a throat husky with cigarettes. Wanda said how fortunate it was that they were all grown-up people who could sit down and talk sensibly; and she invited Jeannette so to sit and talk any morning except Thursday which was the day for Wanda's masseuse. Jeannette got herself ready to go the next morning (a Tuesday) as though for a guilty assignment. She even changed her clothes several times—to little effect as they were all the same sort of clothes and she the same person (with a bad little figure and a face that could never be called anything but interesting). But when she got to Wanda's, it appeared that the masseuse's day had been changed. Jeannette waited perched on the geometric furniture, hearing the sound of blows ringing from the bedroom and Wanda's shouts of pain. But when Wanda came out, she had her arm around the masseuse and made jokes with her in German and kissed her goodbye. She also kissed Jeannette and was glad she had come and now they would have an adult talk together. Unfortunately there were annoyances—like the maid bringing coffee in the wrong set—that had an irritating effect on Wanda; and although she continued cordial with Jeannette, the frank talk they were to have had together degenerated into Wanda complaining about Otto, how selfish he was, and really not as generous as a man of his means could afford to be. Still, at the end of it, Wanda was pleased with the way it had gone, and that evening she told Otto how he wouldn't have to worry any more about his wife and family because Wanda has just managed all that beautifully, with tact and psychology.

She continued in that belief and never had any conception of the terrible scenes between Otto and Jeannette, or the upheavals within their family. But everyone else knew—and as they grew up, Marie and Hughie knew about it too, though it had all happened at a time when their own parents were still children. Both their parents—Marie's mother and Hughie's father—remembered thumping the piano as loudly as possible to drown out the noise of battle from the master bedroom. Also, they remembered when their father had moved out of the house and, sobbing loudly, had dragged his pigskin luggage down the stairs; and his visits to the house laden with presents for them which their mother afterwards didn't like to see them play with. If they were sick, he would come to the house and sit by their bedside reading aloud—till it was time for Wanda to be chaperoned to a cocktail party or tea dance, when he would jump up and hurry away, even if he was in the middle of a chapter. The youngest child, Walter, was only four when all that started and used to creep into his mother's bed at night; and when he woke in the morning, he found his hair drenched in Jeannette's tears. In later life, it was Walter who had had the most difficulties of all the children; but none of them really could be said to have done anything very much beyond marrying and divorcing and remarrying and spending a lot of money on themselves.

MARIE DIDN'T HAVE much contact with her mother, any more than Hughie with his father. When they spoke of them to each other, it was usually in the third person. "She phoned again today, from Mexico", Marie would say to Hughie who turned his eyes up in sympathetic despair; or "He wants me to come out to the Island to meet his new girl friend"—and then it was Marie's turn to say "Oh poor Hughie." As far as they were concerned, their family was each other, and

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Jeannette. They felt a responsibility to Jeannette, and that it was up to them to compensate her for everyone else's failings.

But now they had begun to fail her themselves; and she began to nag them, so that they sometimes took pains to avoid her. This was easy for Hughie who had a lot of places to go and people to see. But Marie didn't have many friends—she had never bothered to make any, having always had Hughie. When her day at the Asia Society was over, all she could do was come home. As soon as she let herself in, there was Jeannette calling "Is that you, Marie? Is Hughie with you? Where is he?" She followed Marie around and grumbled: "We don't know where he goes, who he goes with—or who he talks to all those hours on the phone." And then: "Who's the friend he went to Spain with? You don't know? He didn't tell you? But he used to tell you everything."

To escape her grandmother, Marie often pretended to be tired and went to bed early. She lay awake in the dark, listening for Hughie to come home, but all she heard was Jeannette bumping about in the apartment. The place was so crammed that it was impossible not to bump into some massive piece of German furniture at every step. But each piece held memories, and Jeannette stumbled about among them, sighing and talking to herself like the old woman she was. Then, late late into the night, Marie heard Hughie come in. Jeannette turned on him at once, so that the next thing Marie heard was his impatient reply and then his bedroom door shutting and the key turning. Jeannette rattled the handle for a while and tried to talk to him through the door; but getting no answer, she gave up and went to bed. Marie waited for her to stop groaning and tossing and knew Hughie was waiting too. When at last there was silence from their grandmother's bedroom, Hughie opened his door and stood there very still, making sure everyone was asleep; and then very, very softly he lifted the receiver of the phone in the living room and talked into it very, very softly.

But one night he made a mistake and thought Jeannette was asleep when she wasn't; or maybe she fooled him, pretending to be. So that night what Marie heard was Hughie quickly replacing the receiver and then Jeannette—"Who were you talking to?"

"No one", Hughie said. "A friend."

"What friend?" After a silence, she demanded: "And Marie?"

"What about Marie? She's got nothing to do with it. I told you, I was talking to a friend." His voice rose in the half-hysterical way Marie knew and dreaded: "Why Marie, who's Marie?" He said "I'm sick of all this", and went back and locked his door again and Jeannette rattled it again and Marie put her pillow over her head.

After that, Hughie spent more time with Wanda than he did at home. He even received mail at her apartment and made some of his long phone calls from there. She wandered in and out of her bedroom where he lay on her bed, whispering into her pale blue telephone. Sometimes she said "Still talking?", but, intent on business of her own, had no time to listen for an answer.

MARIE CAME to see Wanda—of her own accord, which didn't happen often. Wanda was pleased and said they would have a wonderful tête-à-tête together. She loved having tête-à-têtes with Marie, and afterward she always reported to Jeannette how Marie had completely opened her heart to her. Actually, though, it was Wanda's heart that was opened. She talked to Marie about all sorts of intimate matters—even about Otto and how terribly passionate he had been. Wanda confided to Marie that she had never really liked that part but had submitted to it with patience, so that Otto was generally in a good mood and bought her things she needed.

Marie listened in what appeared to be complete absorption, with her hands folded in her lap and her feet in terribly good shoes placed side by side. But that day she suddenly said in the middle—"Has Hughie been here?"

"Hughie?" Wanda was taken aback by this unexpected interruption.

"Has he been to see you?"

"Darling, of course he's been to see me. He's here every day. If I were a few years younger, I'd begin to have thoughts. I'm no longer used to having young men lying on my bed crying, though once upon a time, I can tell you—"

"Hughie *cries*?"

"You should have seen him yesterday after he had this big loud row on the telephone with someone."

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Marie was holding a teaspoon, and it made a tiny clinking sound against her cup; she put it down and said in her usual steady little voice: "What was it about?"

"I wish I knew, darling—I was trying to listen but I had this idiot man here who had been sent to repair my air-conditioner. And by the time he was through, my nerves were so bad, I had to take something. It happens every time I have to have one of these people here—the working men in this country, that's a chapter in itself."

"And you don't know who he was talking to?"

"It was someone called Chuck. Hughie kept saying 'Chuck, listen to me, Chuck!' Is it the friend he went to Spain with? I asked your grandmother at lunch yesterday, but she started shouting and getting excited. Really, sometimes I think Jeannette is not a normal person. She said it was none of my business, none of her business, none of anyone's business who are Hughie's friends. This she says to me."

Marie had noticed that Jeannette no longer waited up for Hughie. By the time he came in, she was always fast asleep—at least, judging by the utter silence in her bedroom. Hughie began to be less cautious, and one night, shortly after her visit to Wanda, Marie heard sounds from his bedroom that made her bolder than usual. She got out of bed and into her negligée and matching slippers; she went to Hughie's door and breathed through the keyhole: "Let me in, Hughie."

"Go away, Marie", he replied.

But she stood there in silence, till he opened. She slipped in and turned on the light. "Don't!" Hughie cried out in a low voice, and hid his eyes behind his arm.

She turned it off again at once.

"Don't dare ask anything", he said.

"I'm not."

They spoke in whispers. They were used to that from childhood, for their grandmother had always been alert and would call out to them "Children, what's wrong?" Something had been wrong quite often. With Hughie, that is, and then Marie had had to come in to comfort him. That had happened every time he had any contact with either of his parents; or some boy he liked very much at school liked another boy better; or he had quarrelled with his best friend, or he didn't have any friends—Hughie had a lot of upsets and disappointments in his life. He didn't actually seek comfort from Marie on these occasions—he was secretive and didn't want her to know and was angry if she found out by herself; but he always submitted to the comfort she offered, and they ended up in his bed together, with him peacefully asleep and she holding him or just looking at him by the light shining from the windows of the building opposite.

That's how she saw him now; and by this light his face didn't look all that changed from when he was ten years old. The only difference was that, perhaps with repeated disappointments (after all, Hughie was nearly 30), his mouth drooped somewhat at the corners; and his eyes, though the same beautiful glass-green, were no longer as clear as they had been, as though washed too frequently by tears.

"Is Jeannette asleep?" he asked.

They stood in the middle of his bedroom and listened. It was quite eerie not to hear her call out to them: "Children?" As if she were no longer there; or no longer cared; or didn't want to know. She had been that way ever since the night she had caught him on the telephone.

"Is she all right?"

"Of course", Marie replied. "She's asleep. Let's get in bed. Just to hold you", she pleaded.

He wanted it as much as she did: to be held in someone's arms and be comforted. It was years since he had allowed her to sleep with him, though how she had longed to repeat that ecstasy of her childhood. Only it was not repeated now—on the contrary, there was even a sort of pain in her that she didn't want to acknowledge: but there it was, though he lay in her arms just the same sweet way he had done in their childhood.

THEN IT WAS Wanda's birthday, and that was a day of traditional celebration for all of them. It had come about in this way: Wanda had always set great score by her birthday, and during the years Otto lived with her, it had been celebrated with the panache he knew to bring to such an occasion. Then had come his terminal illness, and after he left the hospital, he couldn't move back to Wanda's but had to be brought home to Jeannette.

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Wanda's birthday had come around just a few weeks before he died, and Jeannette could not refuse his request that they should celebrate it in the house on Eleventh Street. So it happened that the first time Wanda was allowed to enter their home was in honour of her own birthday. She arrived full of expectation as to what treats had been prepared for her. Her genuine excitement and pleasure, her complete unconsciousness, turned the afternoon into an enjoyable birthday party. Otto had been propped up in a chair, and the two other guests present—Hughie and Marie, aged 6 and 3—ran around as excited as Wanda, stuffing their mouths with birthday cake and chasing balloons around their dying grandfather.

After that, though Otto was no longer with them, the rest of them never missed a year. Sometimes Hughie was off on one of his trips, but wherever he was (one year it was as far away as Afghanistan), he managed to get through to them on the telephone. The year of his return from Spain he was there, and it was he who opened the door to Wanda and was the first to congratulate her. She advanced into the apartment with caution, almost on tiptoe, as though at every step she was expecting to stumble over some surprise that she was not yet to know about. She had done herself over from top to toe: her hair was an orange flame, her eyelids matched her new emerald silk dress, and she was hung about with every kind of valuable trinket. And she smiled and smiled, with brilliant capped teeth slightly askew within her scarlet lips, and wobbled over the carpet on legs as long as a stork's and now also as skinny.

The afternoon tea of the first celebration had by now been replaced by an elaborate evening meal. This was cooked by Jeannette, who was a magnificent cook (her father, and then her husband too, had been a gourmet), and took days of preparation. It was good for her to be engrossed in this activity: the last birthday party always recalled the first, giving rise to feelings she thought to have transcended years ago. So she exhausted herself in the kitchen, mumbling over her cooking pots, and when Wanda arrived, she only had time to dash out of the kitchen, peck Wanda's cheek, and return at once before anything got burned.

Wanda sat enthroned on the high, floral sofa, waiting to be made a fuss of. Hughie brought her drink—he knew what she liked: very sweet sherries or liqueurs, she drank the way other people eat chocolates; and Marie brought the stool with the needlepoint spaniel on it for her feet. "So much fuss just because it's someone's birthday", smiled Wanda. As always on this day, she was in a fabulously good mood: but this year there lurked something extra in her smile, as if she looked forward not only to the surprises prepared for her but had one of her own. Soon she began to throw out hints, for there was this about Wanda—she loved secrets but could never keep one.

She said "This year the birthday child is going to ask for a very special something."

"A present?" Marie and Hughie asked—looking at each other, for of course all her presents were already bought and wrapped.

She laughed, adoring it that she could mystify them. "You'll see", she said. "You'll hear. I've thought it all out. All up here in my own mind."

"I can't wait", Hughie said, shutting his eyes in an absolute passion. "You'll *have* to tell me."

"A secret", she said, laying one finger on her lips. But it was too much for her that Jeannette should be kept out of it, and she went to join her in the kitchen.

Marie and Hughie looked at each other again: "What could it be?" Marie wondered. But Hughie shrugged; Wanda and her secret had already gone from his mind and something else had taken its place that made his mouth droop. But when he caught Marie's sympathetic gaze on him, he said "Let's get our show on the road", and swung away from her with his graceful swinging step. He went into the dining room to get the table ready, and she followed him to act as his assistant. She was never allowed to do anything more than fetch and carry, but she liked doing that, admiring his tremendous gift for arrangement and decoration. But today he ordered her about with a rather cold imperiousness, bustling around as if to make it clear to her that nothing beyond folding table napkins and arranging silverware to its best advantage was on his mind.

JEANNETTE WAS not pleased to have Wanda come into the kitchen: puffy, red, and

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streaked with dough, she felt at an even greater disadvantage with her than usual. But of course Wanda didn't give a thought to any sort of comparison between herself and Jeannette—she never did, any more than a bird of plumage would have done, stepping on dainty claws among dun sparrows.

She launched straight into her secret: "Jeannette, what do you want more than anything in the world? . . . Imagine, Jeannette; shut your eyes and imagine—Wanda is the fairy godmother, she holds a wand, she says 'Make a wish!' "

She shut her own eyes in blissful wishing—at the same time extending a hand as though it held a wand. But Jeannette pushed past her with a heavy casserole dish to be put in the oven.

Wanda opened her eyes again: "You're no fun. . . . It's something to do with your family", she prompted. "What do you wish for most in your family? Like, for instance, for Hughie? Jeannette? What do you wish for Hughie? If you could wish for him?"

Jeannette gave her a quick look. But Wanda went on smiling in the blandest way, so that it was clear she meant only the blandest, nicest thing.

At that moment Hughie himself came in, warbling "Time for presents!" He put one arm around Wanda and the other around Jeannette and led them both into the living room. Here Wanda uttered her annual cries of complete surprise at her presents laid out on top of the grand piano. But she very quickly undid all the pretty packaging, and putting on her glasses, placed those things that would be useful to her on one side and those that had to be taken back and exchanged on the other.

Then they all crowded into the dining room for the meal Jeannette had prepared. They had to sit wedged against the walls, for the dining room was too small for the enormous suite of table, chairs, and sideboard that had belonged in the Eleventh Street house. As the rich meal progressed, their physical discomfort increased, till they felt as heavy as the furniture that wedged them in. It was also hot and dark in the room, for Hughie had drawn the curtains and lit festive candles in the candelabras.

He sat at the head of the table in what had once been, long ago and in another house, his grandfather's place. He tried to make things go, was amusing and attentive. Marie did her best to back him up, but, unlike Hughie, she wasn't sociable by nature. And this year it was particularly difficult because of being so worried about him and having to struggle not to show it. But he was aware of it, and it made him devote himself very hard to Wanda without ever turning to the side where Marie sat. As it got hotter and hotter in the room, he became exceedingly thirsty and drank more wine than he should. He was laughing a lot and on a high note like an over-excited girl. He kept refilling Wanda's glass too, so that she became quite high-spirited. She was certainly enjoying her party, the only unshadowed person there.

Then it was time for dessert and champagne. Jeannette, after placing the crystal bowl of lemon cream and macaroons on the table, tried to return to the kitchen, but Hughie summoned her back. He opened the first bottle—the cork flew up, the champagne gushed out and streamed over the edge of the glass into which he quickly poured it. That made him laugh and he sucked it up and poured again and drank again. "Wait, Hughie", said Marie, so he drank more, and more, before any toasts had been made at all.

Now Wanda's hour had come. She ordered everyone to sit down; she waited for their silence. She raised her glass: "All right", she cried, "the first toast is for me, the birthday child!" and she obligingly waited for them to drink to her. Then she stood up and continued "But today the second toast is even more important than the first—"

"Impossible!" cried Hughie.

"Oh yes, it's very possible: because the second toast is to you—and to Marie!"

"Sit *down*, Wanda", Jeannette said, even tugging at Wanda who fought her off and continued:

"To what we hope you will be telling us today!

Hughie and Marie!

Hooray,

Hooray!"

Hughie was the first to drink, but before he could get very far, Marie said "Why don't you have some water"; she offered him the glass she had filled for herself. He pushed her hand aside, so that the water spilled out and over the tablecloth and dripped down the sides on to Wanda's lap, causing her to scream. Marie was already running around for dry cloths to

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soak up the water before it could get to the table and ruin the polish.

Wanda was so wet, she had to go and take off her dress. She did so in Jeannette's bedroom, and afterward she had to be wrapped in one of Otto's brocade dressing gowns. She was cross now—her party mood spoiled: because of her dress, and also her surprise toast had not met with the applause and gratitude she had expected. Jeannette hadn't yet said a word.

"Aren't you pleased? Isn't it what you wanted? What's the matter with you?" Wanda said.

"My God, not like that", Jeannette said.

"Then like what? That's the way it has to be done: if young people don't know where they're going, the family has to take over."

AS A MATTER OF FACT that's how it had been done with Jeannette and Otto. She had adored him for four years and he had been kind to her. Then their aunts got together and one of them—the one Otto had got along with the best: a theatrical designer, with cropped black hair, short skirt, and tons of make-up—had had a serious talk with him. The following weekend Otto had driven Jeannette out to the house of another aunt on Long Island. That aunt was musical and had a string quartet playing in her garden on Saturday nights. Otto and Jeannette had sat side by side on chairs under a magnolia tree. A tiny breeze had sprung up, and Otto, pretending to think that was why Jeannette was trembling, went inside to get her shawl. And with the same movement with which he placed this shawl over her shoulders, he also made her rise and led her—the music still playing—down to the sea shore. The words he spoke to her there were a continuation of the music, and also of the sound of the ocean that had moonlight split up in it and rolling in its waves. That night, while Jeannette lay awake on her bed by the open window, the musical aunt in the Hamptons telephoned the theatrical aunt in New York, and after that for several days everyone in the family was on the telephone to each other.

It did not take Jeannette long to find out that the expectations she had had that night had been excessive. She did have happiness, but it was of a different order from what she had anticipated. For instance, on that day of Wanda's first birthday party, when Otto was still there: after Wanda had gone home with her presents, he had lain in bed, completely exhausted from having sat up in a chair for an hour. His hand dangled over the edge of the bed. Jeannette had taken it and held it in her own, and though he had no strength in it at all, he had attempted to press hers: attempting, she knew, to express his gratitude for having had Wanda in the house and providing her birthday treat for her. But then—and especially in comparison with the great effort he was making just to press her hand—that had seemed a very small thing to have done; and she had brought his hand up to her lips, to make him understand that it was she who was glad and grateful.

HUGHIE WAS DIFFERENT from his grandfather in every way. Otto hadn't much liked drinking, but when he had to, he could hold it. Hughie liked it, but couldn't hold it. After Wanda's toast, he had to lock himself in the bathroom, and when he came out, he was chalk-white and suffused with perspiration. Marie knew what to do. She bedded him on the sofa in the living room and wiped his brow to which his hair was sticking. In one way, she was sorry to see him so ill, but in another she was not: Hughie's mother had been an alcoholic and so were several of his uncles on that side of his family. But Hughie always threw up.

She busied herself with folding the wrapping papers Wanda had left scattered around the room. She glanced frequently at Hughie, lying there with his eyes shut in exhaustion. When he opened them, the first thing he said was: "Wanda is a fool. She's worse than a fool. She's an imbecile: literally. I mean it."

"Jeannette says Wanda's brain is the size of a pea. That's why she's got this terribly small head. Like a pea-hen."

"I feel awful. It happens every time. Every *time*", he said, in a fury with himself.

"I'll get the cologne", Marie said.

The cologne he liked was in Jeannette's bedroom. Marie found Jeannette crouching on a stool at the foot of the bed, fierce and brooding like a little old witch. Wanda was laid out on the bed, her head with its flaming hair

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raised on a pillow, her eyes shut: wrapped in Otto's scarlet, emerald, and gold dressing gown, she might have been dead and embalmed for thousands of years.

"Is she sleeping?" Marie whispered.

"No, she's not", Wanda answered for herself. "She's lying here thinking how can people be so selfish and ungrateful."

"Don't worry about her", Jeannette told her granddaughter. Then she said: "What did Hughie say?"

Marie was usually so controlled that she could even stop herself blushing; but when she did blush—as now—the blood could be seen to flood very quickly under her light skin right up into her light hair.

It wasn't that Jeannette didn't feel for her, but she had to press on: "He does care for you. He loves you. As far as he can, he does. What more do you want?" she added—rather impatiently, for it seemed to her that Marie was being unreasonable in her expectations. She too would have to learn that one lived on earth and not in heaven.

"Marie!" he called from the living room.

"You see", Jeannette pointed out. "He can't be five minutes without you."

"He's *ill*", Marie said. "He wants the cologne." She went out with it quickly; there were tears in her eyes that she didn't want anyone to see. She didn't realise that there were tears in Jeannette's eyes too, rising as though from the same source in Marie's heart.

Before rejoining Hughie, Marie dashed cold water on her face, but of course he knew what was going on. That's what so often made him mad at her—that he always knew about her, and knew that she did about him, without either having to say one word. It was like being one person with her instead of two, and he resented it—to be so commingled with a girl.

She sat massaging his temples on the sofa where he lay, fair and dreamy, amid the floral bouquets of the upholstery. The fragrance of lemony lime cologne enveloped them. After a long while, he said—or rather, whispered (they knew they were being listened for): "We could, you know. If you want to."

"You don't have to take any notice of what *she* says: Wanda."

"But we could."

"Children?" Jeannette called to them from the bedroom.

Hughie put his hand over Marie's mouth.

"Children?"

All of them—even Wanda lying mummified on the bed—listened intently. But nothing was heard except clocks ticking—all those useless old clocks from Eleventh Street that Jeannette couldn't bring herself to part with.

As soon as Hughie took his hand away, Marie whispered: "We don't have to; just because *they* want to."

"*I* want to", Hughie said—irritably, for he always disliked it when Marie didn't at once fall in with his wishes.

"Is it my birthday or isn't it my birthday!" Wanda trumpeted from the bedroom.

Her party wasn't even finished yet; the dessert hadn't been eaten nor the champagne drunk. They wedged themselves back into the dining room. The table was wrecked of course, and the candles were beginning to gutter. But Hughie opened another bottle. Wanda repeated her toast. They drank to Hughie and Marie. Wanda looked triumphantly at Jeannette and challenged her: "Say 'thank you, Wanda darling'." When Jeannette wouldn't, she called her a stubborn old woman—but smilingly, for she was very pleased with herself and what she had achieved.

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Louis de Jong

The "Great Game" of Secret Agents

Was it "Treason"—or sheer incompetence?—which enabled the ingenious German "Englandspiel" to cripple Resistance forces in World War II? A Dutch historian investigates the charges

BY 20 MARCH 1942, almost two years after the Nazi occupation, sixteen secret agents, parachuted in from England or landed on the Channel beaches, were at work in the Netherlands. Of these sixteen, eight had been selected by Dutch officials working in association with the British Secret Intelligence Service (M.I.6). They had orders to transmit secret information and to smuggle to Britain various people selected by Queen Wilhelmina and the Dutch Prime Minister (Professor P. S. Gerbrandy).

The other eight agents had been sent out by the Special Operations Executive (S.O.E.), an organisation established in 1940 for the express purpose of setting up sabotage groups. One of these agents, however, had a purely political mission: to contact the socialist leader Koos Vorrink.

Of the sixteen agents, five had fallen into German hands before 20 March 1942: three from the M.I.6 group and two from the S.O.E. group.

Colonel Hermann J. Giskes of the *Abwehr* (German Secret Service) and Major Josef Schreieder of the *Sicherheitspolizei und SD* (Security Police and Security Service of Himmler's *SS*) tried immediately to start a *Spiel*, a game with England by using the radio transmitter of Willem van der Reyden, one of the captured M.I.6 agents. The Dutch Section of M.I.6 was aware of this, however. Van der Reyden had not given away his "security check", and so Giskes and Schreieder did not know about the prearranged mistakes that had to be included in all the messages he transmitted to England. The absence of the security check was reported to the Dutch Section of M.I.6 by Central Communications, a large unit in which all the codes and security checks agreed with the agents were kept; messages intended for the agents by the various Country Sections were coded and sent out, and incoming signals were received, decoded, security-checked and forwarded to the Country Section concerned. At the time M.I.6 had the only such unit in England. It was also used by S.O.E.

On 20 March (or possibly 21 March) London received a coded message from Hubert Lauwers, a radio operator working with the sabotage agent Thijs Taconis, whom S.O.E. had dropped at the beginning of November 1941. Both had been captured. Lauwers had fallen into German hands on 6 March 1942, Taconis three days later. In due course, Lauwers agreed—as his orders allowed—to transmit messages for the Germans. But in accordance with the same orders he did not disclose his "security check": every 16th letter of all his messages had to be wrong. When they arrested him, the Germans discovered a message on him in which a 16th letter occurred in "*stop*", a word often used in these messages (as in cables). Lauwers pretended to Giskes and Schreieder that his "security check" required him to transmit the word "*stop*" as "*step*" or "*stip*" once in every message he sent. As a result, the first message transmitted on German instructions, in which the word "stop" occurred in a different position in the text, lacked the appropriate security check. The 16th letters were correct. The message was received, decoded, checked, and sent on to the Dutch Section

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of S.O.E., marked "*security check omitted.*" When it reached the head of the Section, Major Charles Cecil Blizard, he judged the message so inherently reliable that he chose to ignore the reported absence of the security check and continued to exchange messages with Lauwers.

THE FIRST CONSEQUENCE was that of the six S.O.E. agents who were still at large on 20 March, five were arrested in late April or early in May, among them the radio operator H. J. Jordaan. The only agent to elude the Germans was the one who had been ordered to contact Koos Vorrink. Having no radio link with London, he wandered round Holland and Belgium until he finally managed to return to England in September 1943.

Hendrik Johan Jordaan, the second radio operator to be arrested, also held on to his "security check." He insisted that he had never been given one, and refused to transmit any messages. Thus the first signal sent by a German radio operator on Jordaan's transmitter revealed that Jordaan was using a new radio operator; the security check was not present. Once again Major Blizard ignored this fact, and had the following signal sent back: "INSTRUCT NEW OPERATOR IN USE OF SECURITY CHECK", thus exposing Jordaan, who was then forced to reveal it. Giskes and Schreieder now had two radio links with London—the Lauwers link with an incorrect security check, and the Jordaan link with a correct security check.

THE SECOND RESULT of the *Spiel* was that of the five M.I.6 agents still at liberty four were arrested towards the end of May. (The fifth, Aart Alblas, who had been dropped in July 1941, continued to transmit his own messages; and Willem Niermeyer, another agent dropped by M.I.6, began to operate late in March 1942.) The first four had fallen into German hands after making contact with a sabotage agent dropped by S.O.E. at the beginning of April, and had been arrested later that month following a message over the Jordaan link.

A GERMAN RECEPTION COMMITTEE lay in wait for all secret agents whose arrival was announced over the Lauwers or the Jordaan links (giving the passwords, and the precise day, hour, and place of the proposed drop): one at the end of March, two at the end of May, and two on 22 June.

By that time, Giskes and Schreieder were playing the *Englandspiel* over five links. The precise messages exchanged are no longer known, but we may take it that Giskes and Schreieder were faced with a difficult task in continuing to convince the Dutch Section of S.O.E. in London that all was well; after all, sabotage agents are expected to

RECENT *spy fiction—television's increasing obsession with John Le Carré's "moles" and other species of traitorous double-agents—may have been prompting second thoughts about certain calamitous episodes of World War II. In Holland there has been a revival of suspicion about disasters involving Dutch secret agents sent out from England in 1942–43 by Britain's "Special Operations Executive" (S.O.E.). No sooner had a man landed than he was taken prisoner. But even the most obvious signals that things were going wrong—and that the captured operatives were now pawns in a clever German "Englandspiel"—turned out to be of no avail. Perhaps among the tinkers, tailors and soldiers of the S.O.E. there was a Nazi agent? The doubts of the Dutch public have never been quite alayed.*

BRITISH PUBLIC OPINION—*since the dramatic exposure of Sir Anthony Blunt, the famous art-historian, as the "Fourth Man" (and senior contact) of the Burgess-Maclean-Philby espionage network—has been even more wildly excited. One usually sober national newspaper, in a sensational front-page story ("Sunday Telegraph", 18 November), put the tragic British failures in wartime Holland—"49 MEMBERS OF THE RESISTANCE DIED"—down to the treasonable role of one "Blunt" who was the chief of the disastrous operation. But this "Blunt" was not the art-historian (who was in M.I.5, not S.O.E.), merely the coincidental code-name for Major Charles Blizard whose activities are meticulously analysed by Dr de Jong in this article. (And anyway, why should a "Russian mole" in British intelligence want to betray to Hitler secret Dutch agents who were preparing the underground for the "Second Front" Stalin was demanding? . . .) The Fleet Street error was one of the classic journalistic cases of mistaken identity where a "hot scoop", because of hurried research and checking, becomes a ludicrous "canard."*

LOUIS DE JONG *until his recent retirement was Director of the Netherlands State Institute for War Documentation. Nine volumes of his official "History of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the Second World War" have been published so far; for the latest Dr de Jong re-investigated the whole case of the "Englandspiel." In a previous* ENCOUNTER *article (December 1978) he presented the documentary history of the concentration-camp revolt in Sobibor.*

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perform acts of sabotage and to set up sabotage groups. The two German officers had to invent one fabrication after another to persuade S.O.E. that the agents were doing their work, or had a very good reason for not doing so.

THEIR POSITION EASED considerably on 27 June 1942, when, following a message over one of the five links, they captured the secret agent George Jambroes together with his radio operator. Jambroes carried orders for the organisation of resistance groups involving over a thousand men throughout the Netherlands. These groups were not intended to spring into action immediately, but to keep themselves in readiness for the great Allied invasion of Western Europe, when they would be expected to sabotage airfields, command posts, telephone exchanges, and railways. These orders formed part of the *Plan for Holland*—a plan drawn up by S.O.E. in collaboration with the Dutch Liaison Office headed by Colonel M. R. de Bruyne, and approved by Professor Gerbrandy, by Admiral Furstner (Minister of the Navy, and responsible for de Bruyne's department), and by Queen Wilhelmina.

S.O.E.'s part in the *Plan for Holland* was clear. It was not only to be involved in acts of sabotage but also in creating and equipping armed resistance groups, or "Underground Armies." In respect of the latter, S.O.E. took its orders from the British Chiefs of Staff who, in April 1942, with Winston Churchill's agreement and under American pressure, had agreed in principle to relieve the hard-pressed Russians by mounting a major Allied landing in Brittany that summer. If such a landing was not to turn into a disaster from the outset, intervention by the kind of sabotage units envisaged in the *Plan for Holland* was essential.

The idea of the Brittany landing was abandoned at the end of July. With the approval of Roosevelt and Churchill, the British and US Chiefs of Staff decided instead on a major Allied invasion of French Morocco and French Algeria in early November. Since, however, the landing in Western Europe had merely been postponed and was now expected in 1943 or 1944, Major Blizard and Colonel de Bruyne continued to work on the *Plan for Holland*. Indeed, the scope of that plan was extended in the autumn of 1942 when Professor Gerbrandy, van Lidth de Jeude (the Dutch Minister of War, who had taken over responsibility for de Bruyne's department), and Queen Wilhelmina approved de Bruyne's complementary *Plan B*. Once the first thousand or so armed resistance-fighters had been recruited and equipped, much larger resistance groups totalling some ten thousand men would have to be created and armed, ready to come into action the moment Hitler's forces began to crumble under the weight of an Allied invasion of the Netherlands.

TO ORGANISE all the units needed for the implementation of the *Plan for Holland* and *Plan B*, the Dutch Section of S.O.E. dropped a further 27 agents from the end of September 1942 to the end of May 1943. All were arrested by the Germans on their arrival—which had been announced over the captured links of the *Englandspiel*. In addition, a further three sabotage agents were dropped during this period, as well as three S.O.E. agents on a special intelligence mission, two S.O.E. agents instructed to establish an escape route, and one agent—Beatrix Terwindt—who had orders to set up a so-called "pilot line" for M.I.9 (that section of the Intelligence Service responsible for the escape of service personnel). Beatrix Terwindt was sent out in mid-February 1943 by S.O.E.—M.I.6 still having the fullest confidence in the S.O.E. communications system. In any case, M.I.6 had no agents of its own with transmitters in the Netherlands at the time (Alblas having been arrested as part of the *Englandspiel* in the middle of July 1942, and Niermeyer as a consequence of the *Spiel* at the beginning of October 1942).

ALL IN ALL, over a period of fourteen months, from late March 1942 to late May 1943, the Germans were able, as a direct or indirect result of their *Englandspiel*, to arrest a total of 55 secret agents, of whom 43 were seized immediately on arrival. Moreover, Giskes and Schreieder had succeeded in making contact over 17 different links with the Dutch Section of S.O.E., whose head, Major Blizard, was succeeded at the end of August 1942 by Major Seymour Bingham, Jr. Six links were simultaneously in use by the middle of September and eleven at the beginning of 1943.

Should we take it that all the relevant security checks had been surrendered to Giskes and Schreieder? By no means. Major Blizard, as we saw, had attached no importance to the absence of the "security check" in the original message sent by Lauwers. It seems reasonable to assume that he treated no differently the decoded messages handed on to him by Central Communications (S.O.E.

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used its own centre from 1 June 1942) and endorsed "security check omitted." Blizard was primarily concerned with the content of the messages, and the content appeared to be reliable. We know that at least four of the first messages sent over the seventh link of the *Englandspiel* (that of the sabotage agent van Hemert, who was arrested upon arrival in the Netherlands at the end of July 1942) did not include the agreed security check. Blizard's successor, Major Bingham, nevertheless continued to send messages over that link for more than a year. This suggests that other agents may also have managed to withhold their security checks from the Germans.[1]

It could not have been easy for them to do so. To those agents caught on their arrival because of the *Englandspiel*, arrest must have come as an enormous shock. This shock would have been increased when it appeared that the Germans (who interrogated them closely) were familiar with even such minor details as the colour of the floor tiles in the S.O.E. training schools and the cigarette brands preferred by the British instructors. Worse still, the Germans went on to insinuate or to state explicitly that they were in contact with a "traitor" in Britain—at a later stage they made special mention of the name of Major Bingham in this connection. Not surprisingly, some of the agents were so shaken by these revelations that they added considerably to the enemy's store of knowledge. That there were nevertheless some, perhaps many, who did not reveal the great secret of their security check is quite remarkable.

OF OVER ONE THOUSAND messages exchanged as part of the *Englandspiel*, a mere nine have been preserved, eight of them in German. Almost all the documents bearing on the work of the *Abwehr* and the *Sicherheitspolizei* have been destroyed, as were most of the signals sent and received by S.O.E. (a point to which I shall return).

Add to this the fact that only five secret agents survived the catastrophe. Johan Ubbink and Pieter Dourlein (who were arrested at the end of November 1942 and the middle of March 1943 respectively) managed to escape together at the end of August 1943 from the prison at Haaren in the southern Netherlands where all the *Englandspiel* agents were kept; Lauwers, van der Reyden, and Beatrix Terwindt were liberated at the end of the War, the first two from Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp, and Beatrix Terwindt from Mauthausen Concentration Camp, where Jordaan had died at the end of the War. Of the other 53 agents, two who had also escaped from Haaren were betrayed, re-arrested in August 1944, and murdered by members of the *Sicherheitspolizei*—or, as one of the Germans involved put it: "*auf Befehl auf der Flucht erschossen* (ordered to be shot while escaping)." The remaining 51 were transferred in April 1944 from Assen (north-eastern Netherlands), where they had been taken from Haaren after the second escape incident, to a prison in Rawicz (Silesia), whence 40 of them were removed to Mauthausen in early September 1944. There they were murdered most horribly. The remaining eleven were probably taken to the concentration camp of Gross-Rosen (also in Silesia) where, we may take it, the same fate awaited them.

THUS, of the secret agents arrested shortly before or during the *Englandspiel*, 54 lost their lives. The *Englandspiel* also claimed many other victims, for it enabled the *Sicherheitspolizei* in the Netherlands and the *Abwehr* in France to infiltrate important illegal groups. In the Netherlands, the Germans were helped by two of the most notorious Dutch *V-Männer* (informers), Anton van der Waals and George Ridderhof, both of whom were executed after the War.

In France, they owed many of their successes to the insistence of the Dutch Section of S.O.E. that the chief organisers of the resistance groups to be created as part of the *Plan for Holland* must report progress in person, and to that end had to return to England via Belgium and France. The first such leader was Jambroes; when he was reported killed in November 1942, K. W. A. Beukema toe Water (an agent who had been dropped in September 1942 and arrested by the Germans) was appointed his successor by Major Bingham and Colonel de Bruyne. To facilitate Beukema's safe return, Major Bingham supplied a contact address in Paris—as a result of which Giskes's assistants were able to penetrate two important S.O.E. networks in France. This, in turn, led to the arrest of two

[1] In November 1943, General Friedrich Christiansen, the German *Wehrmachtbefehlshaber* (C.-in-C.) in the Occupied Netherlands, questioned the *Abwehrstelle Niederlande* (German Counter-intelligence in the Netherlands) as to which of the captured agents could be put on trial. In his reply, the head of the *Abwehrstelle* divided the agents into four different groups. One group (consisting of 22 agents and 5 radio operators) was made up of those who, because they had refused any kind of cooperation or collaboration, need not be treated with "leniency."

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groups of British agents and of an estimated 400 to 1,500 French resistance workers. Thus the *Englandspiel* led to many arrests in France—how many Frenchmen lost their lives in its wake is not known.

As far as the Netherlands is concerned, it is certain that the *Englandspiel* was directly responsible for the liquidation of three intelligence groups and one sabotage group, and that the liquidation of the so-called National Committee (a consequence of the *Englandspiel*, following Vorrink's contacts with the *V-Mann* van der Waals) led to the arrest of about 150 Dutchmen at the beginning of April 1943, including resistance leaders from the major democratic parties. In the Netherlands, arrests connected with the *Englandspiel* continued until the beginning of April 1945. The total number of Dutch citizens ending up in prisons or concentration camps as a result ran into many hundreds. Moreover, the *Spiel* definitely cost the lives—quite apart from those of the 54 secret agents—of at least 28 Dutchmen, and of an estimated 50 crew-members of the twelve British bombers used as transport planes and shot down by the *Luftwaffe*. Thus, apart from its French victims, the *Englandspiel* cost at least 132 lives. The Germans also acquired considerable material booty: arms, sabotage equipment, transmitters, ultra-modern radar sets, clothing, bicycle tyres, and nearly half-a-million guilders in bank-notes.

ALL THESE FACTS justify the conclusion that the *Englandspiel* was a great success for the Germans, albeit a purely tactical one. At first, they had high hopes (greatly increased when Giskes and Schreieder learned about the *Plan for Holland*) that one of the links with the Dutch Section of S.O.E. might reveal where and when the Allied invasion of Western Europe would take place. If that had in fact happened, the *Englandspiel* might have turned out to be a great strategic success as well. But no such revelations were forthcoming, and to that extent the *Englandspiel* must have proved in the end a serious disappointment to the Germans.

This cannot be said to be due to S.O.E.'s Dutch Section. There is every reason to believe that had warnings from the Occupied Netherlands not reached London, the *Englandspiel* would have continued well beyond 1 April 1944, the date that the Germans (knowing that the British had been aware of them for several months) chose to discontinue the *Spiel*, breaking off communications over the two links that had remained intact with a mocking message. . . .

> "MESSRS BLUNT [the code name by which Blizard was known to all agents], BINGHAM AND SUCCESSORS LTD, LONDON. IN THE LAST TIME YOU ARE TRYING TO MAKE BUSINESS IN NETHERLANDS WITHOUT OUR ASSISTANCE STOP WE THINK THIS RATHER UNFAIR IN VIEW OUR LONG AND SUCCESSFUL COOPERATION AS YOUR SOLE AGENTS STOP BUT NEVER MIND WHENEVER YOU WILL COME TO PAY A VISIT TO THE CONTINENT YOU MAY BE ASSURED THAT YOU WILL BE RECEIVED WITH SAME CARE AND RESULT AS ALL THOSE YOU SENT US BEFORE STOP SO LONG."

THREE GRAVE WARNINGS from the Occupied Netherlands were given in 1942 by Lauwers—who was then transmitting messages for the Germans. It was widely believed in the Netherlands during the first few years after the War that S.O.E.'s Dutch Section had "deliberately betrayed" its own agents. Lauwers claimed that one of his early signals contained the uncoded word "*caught*." The Parliamentary Commission of Investigation accepted that Lauwers did not give away his security check, but refrained from pronouncing on the validity of this particular claim.

Unlike the Commission, I accept that Lauwers tried to warn the Dutch Section at great personal risk on three occasions. He firmly believed that the messages containing his warnings would be shown to Major Blizard or Major Bingham. In the event, they were not. Coded messages went no further than Central Communications—the unit run first by M.I.6 and then (from 1 June 1942) by S.O.E.

If we bear in mind the way this unit operated, there is no difficulty in understanding why Lauwer's three warnings were ignored by the young staff employed there.

"Central Communications" employed scores of Morse monitors and decoders. Most of them were young women aged about twenty. The sole duty of the monitors was to jot down, hour after hour, completely incomprehensible series of letters in groups of five, and pass them on to the decoders. What Lauwers failed to realise was that neither the monitors nor the decoders "read" the decoded messages, that is, combined the letters into words.

In Lauwers's first warning, sent at the end of

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March 1942, and repeated several times afterwards, the frequency-change signal (probably *PSF*) had become *GHT*, and the signal *QRU* ("I have nothing further to report") had become *CAU*. There was very little reason for the young monitors and decoders to pay special attention to these two groups of letters, or to reverse their order and thus read the word "*Caught*" in the message.

In Lauwers's second set of warnings (sent in May 1942) he changed the coded group CARGS into CAUGH on three occasions, followed by the error sign: T. The monitor, however, usually crossed out the preceding group of letters as soon as she received the error sign. It seems likely, therefore, that the word "*Caught*" never reached her consciousness. The decoder, for her part, was handed a message in which every CAUGH-T had been crossed out.

In his third warning (sent in August 1942) Lauwers made use of so-called jumbled letters: random groups which preceded the beginning of the message proper (indicated by "*NR*" and a figure) and followed its conclusion (indicated by "*END*"). Lauwers had been instructed by S.O.E. to use at most 20 jumbled letters per message. The Germans for their part had told him that he must not include any vowels (lest he form actual words). Hence, if Lauwers wanted to transmit words, he had to make deliberate mistakes, under the eyes of the German controllers who watched him carefully while he was transmitting. He decided to include the following sentence among the jumbled letters of two of his messages: "*Worked by Jerry since March sixth, Jeffers* [the S.O.E. code name for Jordaan] *May third.*"

However, he was able to transmit no more than the first half of this warning, cut into two. After decoding, the message would thus have read "*worked by*" before "*Nr*", and "*Jerry since*", after "*End.*" Quite apart from the fact that atmospheric interference was common, I think it likely that the decoders, adhering to their normal routine, would have paid no attention to the jumbled letters, let alone combined the two parts of the transmitted first half of Lauwers's warning, which were separated by what was presumably a fairly long message. One must bear in mind that the British officers in the Dutch Section of S.O.E. in London did not actually see any of the three sets of warnings: the first two were contained in coded signals (the individual Country Sections received *decoded* messages only) and the third consisted of jumbled letters which were not included in the decoded messages, all of which began with "*Nr*" and finished with "*End.*"

IT HAPPENED THAT Lauwers believed the British were really much more cunning than the Germans. Thus he wrongly concluded that if S.O.E. continued to use the link despite his warnings, it must be playing a game of its own with Colonel Giskes and Major Schreieder.

Major Bingham did become suspicious in the period February–March 1943, and sent all the signals received since March 1942 to an expert in M.I.5, who presumably focused on the contents and found nothing amiss. In May, Colonel de Bruyne (whose department was not much more than a recruiting office for S.O.E.) also began to have doubts. To allay them, he was shown a few of the hundreds of messages exchanged in the course of the *Englandspiel*, and these in paraphrased form. De Bruyne did not know that messages *without the requisite security checks* had been accepted as *authentic*. Indeed, he and his staff were not even familiar with the idea of security checks. De Bruyne had never doubted the competence and efficiency of the S.O.E.'s Dutch Section. His doubts were based on a vague feeling that treachery was afoot somewhere in the Netherlands. This feeling had been aroused by the "winding up" of the National Committee (reports of this first reached London in May 1943), and de Bruyne, at the end of May, decided not to supply Major Bingham with fresh trainee agents in accordance with *Plan B* (the *Plan for Holland* organisation was said to have been completed) until such time as Beukema toe Water, Jambroes's "successor", had handed in his report in person.

THE FIRST CLEAR REFERENCE to the *Englandspiel* from the Occupied Netherlands reached London on 19 June 1943. Received, not by de Bruyne's office, but by the Dutch Government's Secret Information Bureau, established a few months earlier, from it was a warning by P. J. Six, the leader of an important resistance group. His message was brief and (in decoded form) read:

> "FOR COLONEL DE BRUYNE STOP EIGHT PARACHUTISTS INCLUDING DOULIN AND ARABE ARRESTED WEEKS AGO."

The message had been sent from their prison in Haaren by secret agents Dourlein and Boogaert, who had been arrested on their arrival on 10 March 1943, together with a third agent. Dourlein had used his true name in the message, but Boogaert preferred the name he had used during the S.O.E.

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training: "Drake." The message passed through several intermediaries before it reached P. J. Six, and as a consequence "*Dourlein*" had become "*Doulin.*" Six's own message had contained the names "*Doulin and Drake*", but Central Communications picked up "*Drake*" as "Arabe"—the "*d*" of the original having turned into an "*a*", and the "*k*" into a "*b.*"

According to the Parliamentary Commission of Investigation, P. J. Six's message was of crucial importance in revealing the *Spiel.* In fact, de Bruyne had not known what to make of it. Major Bingham, who was completely taken in by Giskes and Schreieder, put it aside. In my view, both men could—indeed *ought to*—have deduced that Dourlein had been picked up by the Germans "weeks ago" together with seven other secret agents. This group probably included the three agents, Dourlein among them, who had been dropped on 10 March, and perhaps also the four who had gone out three weeks earlier. One of the four was a radio operator who had surrendered his security check which was then used by the Germans for messages transmitted over the 16th link of the *Englandspiel*; and it was over that link that Giskes and Schreieder were able to give out the name of the informer George Ridderhof as a leading resistance fighter in Brussels. In the middle of July 1943, S.O.E. received a *Spiel* message to the effect that Beukema toe Water, who was ostensibly on his way to London, had been arrested in Perpignan. (Giskes had carefully staged the arrest of one of his own assistants.) Then Bingham and de Bruyne appointed C. Droogleever Fortuyn—a secret agent whom the Germans had captured nearly ten months earlier—as Beukema's successor, i.e. as leader of the *Plan for Holland* organisation.

At the beginning of October 1943, two new secret agents whom Bingham had sent to the Occupied Netherlands (they were dropped over Belgium) were told to make contact with George Ridderhof.[2] Bingham was not even completely convinced by a message from the Dutch Legation in Berne that reached London towards the end of November. It contained a report from the agents Dourlein and Ubbink (who had escaped from Haaren and had reached Switzerland), and included the sentence:

> "THE GERMANS HAVE BEEN MAINTAINING CODE LINKS WITH ENGLAND FOR A LONG TIME, ACTING AS IF THEY THEMSELVES WERE THE DROPPED AGENTS."

Giskes and Schreieder had, meanwhile, sent a message over one of the *Englandspiel* links that Dourlein and Ubbink had not really escaped but had been sent back . . . as "double agents."

IT IS SIGNIFICANT that when an investigation into the organisation and methods of S.O.E. was begun in November 1943, the impetus came not from S.O.E. but from the R.A.F. which had been deeply perturbed by the relatively large numbers of aircraft lost on secret missions to the Netherlands. The investigation was carried out by the Joint Intelligence Chiefs, and their report, drawn up at the end of December, found that there was reason to suspect large-scale German penetration of S.O.E. lines of communication in the Dutch Section. The Joint Intelligence Chiefs had plainly failed to see the full picture. For the French Section, too, had by then fallen victim to a large-scale German *Spiel*, and the Belgian Section had been duped as early as 1942.

In any case, Major Bingham was sent out to Australia, and de Bruyne's Bureau was relieved of all further collaboration with S.O.E. The full implications of the *Englandspiel* only became clear to the British authorities when they questioned Major Giskes and some of his collaborators after the War, and to the Dutch after the publication of the fourth report of the Netherlands Parliamentary Commission of Investigation in 1950.

HOW TO APPORTION THE BLAME? When it comes to the question of responsibility, the Dutch official agencies were clearly remiss. Having provided the British S.O.E. with scores of secret agents, they were not further concerned, and allowed S.O.E. to operate on its own.

I must stress that not only Colonel de Bruyne and his staff but also the Dutch Cabinet were firmly convinced that S.O.E. shared the outstanding efficiency for which the British Intelligence Service

[2] In the summer of 1943 Giskes and Schreieder had the impression that S.O.E. was beginning to see through the *Englandspiel.* To counter this possibility, they ordered the blowing-up of several unimportant sections of the Dutch railways. Then (on Sunday, 4 August 1943) they blew up an old barge—laden with aircraft wreckage—on the Maas, in the centre of Rotterdam. It is possible that the R.A.F. took aerial photographs of the damaged ship. Such incidents served to strengthen Major Bingham's conviction that his agents were doing a good job.

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was famed. They—and probably most other Dutchmen at a time when their country was involved in so immense a struggle—found it hard to be critical of any aspect of the British war effort. Today we know better.

In particular, a large question-mark must be placed against British peripheral strategy in Europe. The bombing offensive against German cities pursued illusory objectives. The effects of the blockade of Nazi Germany and Hitler-occupied countries were grossly overestimated. Throughout the War the British were unable to produce tanks that could match those of the Germans. S.O.E. itself was a hastily improvised organisation of amateurs chiefly drawn from the liberal professions, very few of whom had any experience in the exceptionally delicate and perilous field of intelligence work. No wonder S.O.E. was constantly at loggerheads with M.I.6.

Nevertheless, from September 1944, the Dutch Section of S.O.E., headed by Lt.-Col. R. I. Dobson, presided over the arming of the Dutch Forces of the Interior, and thus, particularly in the eastern and northern Netherlands, did in fact give considerable support to the Allied liberators. Moreover, in Norway, Denmark, France and Greece (to take only the European theatre) S.O.E. was responsible for very effective acts of sabotage. In France a concentrated attack on the railway system was of great importance in preventing German reserves from reaching the Normandy front at the time they were first needed. In France, too, the *maquis* was armed by S.O.E., as were resistance fighters in Italy, Greece, and especially Yugoslavia, where S.O.E. aid proved to be of crucial importance to Tito. I have no hesitation, therefore, in stating that S.O.E. made an inestimable contribution to Nazi Germany's defeat—a contribution that was particularly effective whenever S.O.E. could harness itself to existing underground organisations and guerrilla units. S.O.E. arms and sabotage equipment were of exceptional quality, far better than anything the Germans produced. Moreover, the technical training provided by S.O.E. was outstanding—the agents themselves had nothing but praise for it.

ON THE DEBIT SIDE, S.O.E.'s chief weakness was Security. It had an oversimplified, and far too unfavourable, picture of living conditions in Occupied Europe, and was often reprehensibly lax about the equipment carried by secret agents.

All radio operators, no matter which country they were sent to, were supplied with transmitters in identical cases. All agents, despite their occasional protests, were forced to wear shabby clothes (often very alike: Taconis and Lauwers, for instance, looked like twin brothers). All agents were supplied with identical wrist-watches and identical pyjamas. The forged identity cards issued to agents dropped over Holland were so full of mistakes as to be practically useless.

Nor was that all. Radio operators were expected to report that they were standing by to receive messages and to sign off once the message had been received. Thus they broke radio silence twice, enabling the German *Funkfahndung* (radio detection service) to trace them much more easily than they would otherwise have done. Each radio operator was expected to use an individual call sign, and so, however often a given transmitter was moved, *Funkfahndung* could always tell when a particular operator was on the air. In addition, until the beginning of 1944 the "security checks" used in the messages were extremely simple. It is true that from 1942 onwards S.O.E. ran a special department to vet the security aspects of the signals, but the department was staffed by coding, not security experts. In his book *S.O.E. in France* (1966), M. R. D. Foot wrote:

> "An operational security section whose principal task would be to conduct a daily review of the whole of the incoming wireless traffic from the field was perceived too late as a main requirement."

ONLY AGAINST this general background is it possible to comprehend why Major Blizard and Major Bingham were able to pay so little attention to the question of "security checks" without being immediately rapped over the knuckles.

Naturally, the presence of a "security check" in a message did not automatically render that message authentic. It was quite conceivable that the agent involved, tortured or under threat of torture, had surrendered not only his transmission schedule and code but also his security check. If, however, the security check was missing, then the alarm should have sounded at once—why else devise a security check in the first place? The least that a Country Section in London might be expected to do was to ask the agent to repeat his message, and if the security check was again missing to put a so-called test question. This question would have been agreed with the agent in advance—and he would

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then give an agreed reply, one that the Germans had no means of checking.

Yet neither Major Blizard nor Major Bingham kept to these very simple rules. When the *Englandspiel* began, the British Chiefs of Staff made great demands on S.O.E. and I feel that Blizard and Bingham allowed themselves to be blinded by the great operational successes they were misled into believing they had scored in the Occupied Netherlands. I have no reason to doubt that they were honourable and otherwise capable officers; but they failed to grasp the absolute necessity in intelligence work of painstakingly observing the rules of security.

I HAVE ALREADY INDICATED that S.O.E.'s Dutch Section was not alone in being fooled by the Germans, and there were also *Spiele* in Yugoslavia and in Czechoslovakia. Major Giskes has stated that from the beginning of 1942 until the spring of 1944 the Germans seized "perhaps 30%" of the sabotage equipment and arms dropped over Belgium. In France the figure was "about 10%." We also know that ten of the agents sent by S.O.E. to Belgium and eighteen of the agents sent to France were met by reception committees composed of *Abwehr* and *Sicherheitspolizei*. In Belgium these arrests took place from April to September 1942; they led to the capture of a further sixteen S.O.E. agents, both series of arrests being a direct consequence of a *Spiel* played over three links. In France, four ingenious *Funkspiele* (radio games) were played simultaneously over ten months (June 1943–April 1944). In June 1943, one of the radio operators captured in France, who continued to transmit for the Germans but had not given away his two security checks, was told by S.O.E.:

"YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN YOUR DOUBLE SECURITY CHECK."

It should also be mentioned that in France the *Abwehr* succeeded in what it had failed to do in the Netherlands. *V-Männer* penetrated French underground groups directed by the French Section of S.O.E., and they were able to inform the Germans on 5 June 1944 that the Allied invasion was to take place on 6 or 7 June. This information failed to have fatal repercussions only because the German High Command refused to budge from the view (disseminated by the brilliant British "Double-Cross Committee")[3] that the main landing would take place, not in Normandy but in the Pas-de-Calais.

Giskes's and Schreieder's *Englandspiel* differed quantitatively, not qualitatively, from all the other German *Spiele*. It went on longer and had a wider scope. Its greater length is attributable to the skill of Giskes and Schreieder, to the failure of Blizard and Bingham, and to the fact that from the beginning of 1942 to the summer of 1943 the Netherlands was particularly isolated; it had very few secret links with London. Jambroes's mission was intended to pave the way for the creation of a national organisation that would lie low until the right moment. Of the 43 secret agents arrested on arrival as a result of the *Englandspiel*, 29 had been sent for the express purpose of implementing the *Plan for Holland* and *Plan B*.

THERE WERE two "explanations" of the *Englandspiel* which many of the Dutch tended to accept immediately after the Liberation when both were the subject of newspaper articles and books. Each was carefully examined by the Parliamentary Commission of Investigation. According to the first, scores of secret agents had been deliberately sacrificed by S.O.E. to further the Allied war effort. According to the second, these agents had been betrayed to the Germans by traitors in the ranks of S.O.E. or elsewhere in Britain.

After a thorough investigation, the Commission rejected the hypothesis of premeditation as quite without foundation. Indeed, the *Englandspiel* contained not a single element that might be said to have somehow furthered the Allied War effort; there was nothing to show that S.O.E. (as Lauwers believed) was trying to convert the *Englandspiel* into part of a far more important English *Deutschlandspiel*. Admittedly, the English, too, played several games; but these were under the control of the "Double-Cross Committee." That body kept its operations strictly separate from those of S.O.E.—precisely because it had strong suspicions that S.O.E. was weak in security.

The "treason" hypothesis, too, was investigated

[3] The task of the so-called "Twenty" (XX, i.e. Double-Cross) Committee was to supervise the turning-round of German secret agents and to see to it that misleading information was passed to the Germans. The Committee operated with outstanding success throughout World War II. The information, believed by the Germans to be completely genuine, was often of strategic importance. Details of this operation were published by J. C. Masterman in *The Double-Cross System in the War of 1939–1945* (1972) and by Ewen Montagu in *Beyond Top Secret U* (1977).

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by the Commission. It specifically examined the cases of four persons whose names had been mentioned in various publications: Major Bingham, and three Dutchmen—F. Van 't Sant, Baron Steengracht van Moyland, and F. A. van Koutrik. Van 't Sant, one of Queen Wilhelmina's closest confidants, played an important role in Dutch Intelligence from July 1940 to May 1942, but had nothing to do with S.O.E.; indeed, in July 1942, he warned the Dutch Government against the organisation which, he claimed, was running unnecessary risks. Baron Steengracht van Moyland, the nephew of a Berlin *Staatssekretär* in the *Auswärtige Amt* (Secretary of State in the German Foreign Office), worked until 1 July 1942 as a minor official in the Central Information Office, the forerunner of the Netherlands State Secret Information Bureau, in London. In that capacity he had no contacts with agents abroad, and he later joined a special police department (*Politiebuitendienst*) that had no dealings with S.O.E. Van Koutrik had been a paid agent of both British Intelligence and the German *Abwehr* before the invasion of the Netherlands. In Britain, he was employed until August 1943 on checking the credentials of refugees. However, the Parliamentary Commission, having investigated all the relevant information and all allegations against these four men, concluded that "there is not a shred of evidence that points to the possibility of treason."

If we look at the "treason" hypothesis more generally, we find that the most important achievement of the *Englandspiel* was the arrest by special German reception committees in the Netherlands of 43 secret agents sent out by the Dutch Section of S.O.E. The date, place, and hour of the drops, and the passwords to be exchanged had been chosen by the Section—moreover, in a large number of cases the date had to be changed at the last moment because of weather conditions. For these reasons alone, no Dutch official in London could have informed the Germans; none of them (including Colonel de Bruyne and his staff) was privy to the operational data; and none of them had access to the radio links. There was only one official whose position gave him access to all the data: the British head of the S.O.E. Dutch Section. However, there is not the least reason to suppose that either Major Blizard or Major Bingham was a traitor, although Blizard's code name, "Blunt", has caused much confusion during the recent exposure in London of Professor Anthony Blunt as the notorious and elusive "Fourth Man" to Burgess, Philby and Maclean.

There is, indeed, no need to accept the treason hypothesis in order to explain the success of the *Englandspiel*. For though we may never be able to reconstruct the *Englandspiel* as a whole (all signals from S.O.E. were destroyed in 1948 [4]), all the available material points to the same conclusion: incompetence due to a defective and mismanaged security system, together with what the Parliamentary Commission described as "very serious mistakes" but which I prefer to call cardinal blunders.

A SOBER CONCLUSION. Some may prefer the greater thrill of cloak-and-dagger theories, however unproven or unprovable. When these are advanced, I feel, they merely detract from the true history of these events and from their importance. It was not through conspiracy but through British errors that the *Englandspiel* became a German success. And yet, if we consider the successes of the "Double-Cross Committee" (successes that were of strategic importance, in contrast to those of the *Englandspiel*) then we must agree, with Lauwers, that "the British were much more cunning than the Germans"—though, alas, not those among the British "intelligence controls" who sent him and so many other young people on perilous missions that, for the most part, were tragically finished the moment they began.

[4] Not by S.O.E. itself (it was wound up at the beginning of 1946) but by its old rival M.I.6, which took possession of the S.O.E. archives.

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Raymond Aron

"1984": Can Europe Survive So Long?

TWO FAMOUS BOOKS, one by George Orwell and the other by the Soviet historian Andrei Amalrik, have invested the year 1984 with a kind of symbolic meaning. Henry Kissinger's recent Brussels speech about the crisis in NATO mainly called to mind the Amalrik version—but applied to Western Europe rather than to the USSR because it so happens that it will be in or about 1984 that Soviet military superiority will reach its peak.

In Dr Kissinger's long and rather complex text, commentators have tended to single out the doubts he voices about the credibility of the American deterrent, and certainly these were bound to attract public attention. But the former US Secretary of State's self-criticism seems to me just as important and even more convincing than his conclusion—namely, that Europeans can no longer rely on the US "nuclear umbrella." Why is he so forthright in his condemnation of a doctrine which he may not have initiated, but which he certainly professed during his years in power?

"Because he's paving the way for a new career"—that is the cynical answer, and the one given by his opponents. I prefer a different interpretation: that he is recognising a growing danger.

IN THE COURSE OF the last 15 years the balance of Soviet-American power has undergone a fundamental change in favour of the Soviet Union.

Even now, the Americans have a clear superiority over the Russians in nuclear warheads (roughly 11,000 to 5,000). As against that, the Russians are ahead in the number of missiles, payload, and megatonnage. But, more decisive than these numerical comparisons, a disparity has grown up concerning one crucial point: Russia's strategic force will soon be in a position to carry out missions which are beyond the capability of the Americans.

In a few years' time, in fact, the 308 big Soviet launchers authorised by SALT 2, each of them containing 8–10 one-megaton nuclear warheads, will have the capacity—on paper at least—to wipe out practically all America's ground-based missiles (the 1054 Minuteman weapons) on the ground. Since the Soviet Union has also maintained or increased its superiority in so-called conventional armaments, mere "equality" at the strategic weapons level means "overall inferiority" for the United States.

In the early 1960s, when the Americans produced the doctrine of "flexible" or graduated response, they worked on the hypothesis of an attack with conventional weapons which was supposed to be repulsed, as far as possible, with the same conventional weapons. If necessary the Western powers would resort to tactical nuclear weapons: an escalation which would itself entail the threat of further escalation, all the way to the ultimate level of strategic nuclear weapons. This doctrine was meaningful only on the hypothesis that the West would retain the choice of weapons, conventional or nuclear. That hypothesis has now been refuted by Russian advances.

Both in terms of divisions (27 against 47), tanks (7,000 against 21,000) and warplanes (4,300 against 12,350), the Western powers are, in the centre of Europe, outnumbered. But most crucial of all, the USSR has available the SS-20 (a mobile medium-range missile fitted with three nuclear warheads equal in accuracy to the American warheads) as well as the *Backfire*, a bomber which the Russians have "duly promised" not to use against the United States.

Neither the SS-18 nor the SS-20 are weapons designed purely to deter aggression. The SS-18 can destroy land-based missiles, the only ones in the American arsenal which are designed for counter-force strike (i.e. capable of destroying enemy launchers). The SS-20 can destroy tactical nuclear-weapon stores, airfields, or NATO command centres in Western Europe. Three or four years from now, the SS-20 and the *Backfire* bomber will be in a position to paralyse the NATO defence system at a stroke. And what, then, would be the American response? Certainly with their thousands of nuclear warheads they could level most of the enemy's towns to the ground. The point is that their own towns would suffer the same fate.

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WHAT HAS BROUGHT the Americans to such a point?

The theory of "Arms Control" is at least partly to blame. This theory was aimed at reducing the threat of nuclear war to a minimum and at ensuring the balance between the nuclear forces of the two Superpowers as cheaply as possible. Limited to strategic weapons, it inevitably weakened the American deterrent. If you set out to create a situation in which "only a madman" would activate these kinds of weapons, what is left of the nuclear deterrent threat?

The idea was that in the event of "Mutual Assured Destruction" (MAD) the nuclear peril disappeared. With neither party able to eliminate the nuclear weapons of the other, neither would use those weapons (always barring insanity). This line of argument went so far as to see as actually "harmful" any pre-emptive capability, any defence against missiles, and even any protection of the civilian population. The more *vulnerable* the peoples and cities of both countries, the more certain their mutual destruction—and the more *unthinkable* a nuclear war.

The basic requirement of this theory was that the nuclear strength of the two powers should be equally invulnerable—which is *not* the case, or *will not* be the case in 1984! Another requirement was relative equality in the outside theatres of operations, and particularly in Europe. All the American experts had explained that it was necessary for the USA not only to deter the potential aggressor from any attack on their own territory but to deter that aggressor from any action directed against their "vital interests", for example against Western Europe. Little by little the Washington leadership forgot what it had learned or taught. The Soviets were allowed a counterforce capability greater than the American, as well as a local superiority in Europe both in conventional and in nuclear arms.

The ratification or non-ratification of SALT 2 will not appreciably alter the facts of the problem. The "decoupling" of the European theatre from the central balance (in other words the declining deterrent influence of American strategic nuclear arms in Europe) derives not from any formal treaty but from plain, hard, existential facts. Non-ratification would leave the power balance intact for the next few years and would not prevent the Americans from completing the invulnerable *MX* weapons system, which would give them back a first-strike capability (possibly comparable with what the Soviets will have available in a few years' time).

EUROPEANS, on the military level alone, have good reasons *not* to have any wish for ratification: for the Treaty includes the temporary limitation on the range of the Cruise missiles based in Europe (a limitation always at risk of becoming permanent); the apparent ban on passing technical information to the Allies; and the accentuated separation between Europe and America (the US senators may well feel more secure once the Russian *Backfire* bomber is "reserved" for the European theatre).

The cult of détente for détente's sake explains the official support given to the Carter administration by the NATO statesmen. These statesmen are also reluctant to put Brezhnev's back up even by public criticism of SALT 2. The deterioration in the balance of power is giving rise to visible symptoms of what has been called "self-Finlandisation." Turkey does not accept the installation on its soil of listening posts designed to verify the SALT 2 treaty—without having first obtained the consent of Moscow.

OUR OWN FRENCH PSEUDO-DEBATE—triggered by the interviews given by General Buis and by Alexandre Sanguinetti—has been keeping the gallery amused without impressing the people in charge. The West Germans have no intention of exchanging the American protection (in which they may only half-believe) for a French protection or Franco-German nuclear coalition (in which they do not believe at all), which would compromise their relations with Moscow.

The only serious question is: What in Western Europe can counter the Russian SS-20? These missiles could paralyse the NATO system at one blow. Is Europe to make do with the 7,000 tactical nuclear weapons stockpiled under American control, most of them with too short a range to reach Russian soil—or are they to be countered by missile-bearing submarines under the orders of NATO?

The Americans want to restore the balance by installing medium-range missiles (for example, the Pershing II) in Europe. The Germans do not want to be the only ones to "provoke" the Soviets by rearmament; and Bonn ministers in favour of this decision are afraid of causing a public opinion backlash. Allied solidarity in this matter depends on the decision of the Netherlands, which are equally reluctant. Only the French seem convinced that nuclear weapons are not liable to draw enemy fire rather than deter it.

LEONID BREZHNEV'S statements in East Berlin, in the presence of the leaders of the Soviet bloc countries meeting on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the GDR, represent a strategy as old as warfare itself: the idea is to wield both stick and carrot, to offer both threats and promises. It is also thoroughly in keeping with the familiar

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Bolshevik or Marxist-Leninist style in the arrogance of the line taken. In Central Europe the Russians have built up an arsenal which gives them a clear-cut quantitative superiority. In response, the Atlantic alliance proposes to modernise its defences and to increase its defence capacity by 3% a year (on paper at least). Whereupon Brezhnev performs the dialectical diplomatic feat of turning the situation upside-down by accusing the West of starting up the arms race again. He goes on to issue the stern warning that those states which do not accept nuclear weapons on their territory will not be liable to Soviet nuclear attack—whereas the fire will fall upon those states which agree to the installation of "medium-range missiles" (capable of reaching targets within the frontiers of the Soviet Union).

Atlantic planning is dictated by two analyses: one of them applies to the balance-of-power in what is called the central system (the Soviet-American balance in terms of strategic nuclear arms); the other covers the situation in the "theatre of operations", i.e. the arms stationed in Europe.

The SALT agreements cover the super-power "central system" only. They apply only to carriers capable of reaching the territory of one Great Power from the territory of the other, or from submarines. "Forward bases" (and in particular the bombers and fighter-bombers stationed in Britain

The Capitalist System is . . .

practically finished . . . **almost overtaken . . .** **exhausted . . .**

in agony . . . **at an end . . .** **But wonderful that it can still deliver!**

Washington Oct 4

The USA agreed to allow the USSR to make the biggest grain purchase in history, up to 25 million metric tons of wheat and corn during the next 12 months, about 10% of what the USA will produce this year. The biggest previous sale was 18 million tons in 1972.

Moscow Oct 4

The Soviet Union said today that it can get along quite easily without the products it receives in trade from the United States.

"The Soviet economy is capable of providing the country with everything necessary", Pravda said.

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or in Continental Europe) have been excluded from the SALT agreements at the insistence of the US.

President Carter is not certain to obtain the two-thirds majority necessary for ratifying SALT 2. In theory SALT 3, the treaty which would cover "theatre" weapons, comes after SALT 2 and should not be negotiated until after the Senate vote. What is the point of setting off on yet another diplomatic marathon if the result of the last one has not been approved by the Senate?

On the other hand, the NATO states have no reason to wait for the US Congress vote before taking military decisions of their own. In fact, the ratification or non-ratification of SALT 2 will not alter the course of events during the next few years, either in the central system or in the European theatre.

Some of the opponents of SALT 2 have made their support conditional on an increase in defence spending and, in particular, on accelerating the development and deployment of the *MX* (the last new system of intercontinental missiles to be authorised by SALT 2). In any case the *MX* will not be deployed during the five years in which SALT 2 is valid. The predictable lapse of time between the conception and installation of a weapons system is such that in 1979 the experts can tell the statesmen what weapons the two camps will have available between now and 1986 or 1987.

The Russians have caught up with—and in some respects overtaken—the United States in the central system. Of course the Americans with their thousands of warheads can ravage the cities of the USSR; but such a strategy is suicidal against an enemy which has the same capacity. Nevertheless there is some sense in a strategy of using one's own missiles against the enemy's missiles; and three or four years from now the big Russian *SS-18* launchers, with their ten independent-trajectory warheads and pinpoint accuracy, will *sur le papier* be able to wipe out all the land-based missiles of the US.

WHETHER WE BELIEVE that the USSR is "level" or even "ahead" of the US in the central system, it goes without saying that the balance of power in the "theatre"—in Europe—becomes increasingly important. The threat of escalation up to the ultimate level of intercontinental missiles becomes less and less credible the more American superiority has to be replaced with the notion of equality or even inferiority. Now, NATO's inferiority in Europe is more pronounced today than it was ten years ago. It will be less so in a few years' time, if the NATO partners continue to modernise their arms.

According to the best available evidence,[1] in Northern and Central Europe NATO can put up 10 armoured divisions against the Warsaw Pact's 24; 13 mechanised divisions against 23; overall 27 divisions against 47 (27 of them Russian); 7,000 tanks against 20,500 (13,500 Russian); and 2,350 aircraft against 4,200 (2,480 Russian). In themselves, these figures have only a limited significance. We also need to consider the *quality* of the weapons, personnel and training involved, and to bear in mind the *standardisation* of material on the Soviet side and the variety which results from the independence of the Western Allies. The Russians may well have their doubts about the conduct of the states and armies of the countries of Eastern Europe when it comes to a fight.

Having said that, the fact remains that the Soviet camp enjoys a substantial qualitative superiority on the central front, whether in terms of tanks, light aircraft or artillery (10,000 heavy guns, mortars and rockets, as against 2,700). The quantitative superiority once the pride of the Atlantic powers (Americans and Germans) has, to say the least, ceased to be beyond dispute, given the rate at which the Soviet divisions have been equipped with new material in the last few years.

WHAT IS NEW is not so much NATO's inferiority in conventional weapons as Russia's nuclear superiority in the European theatre. Since the early 1960s the Russians have deployed some hundreds of missiles (600, according to US sources) in western areas of their territory. On the other hand the Americans have stockpiled several thousand tactical nuclear warheads in Europe, with short-range carriers. The Soviet medium-range or intermediary missiles (the SS-4 and 5) were not intended for use on the battlefield; their presence embodied as great a threat to Europe as did America's intercontinental missiles to the Soviet Union itself.

As I have suggested, a decisive change arises with Russia's two new weapons, the SS-20 missile and the *Backfire* bomber. The SS-20 is mobile, impossible to locate, carries three independently targeted warheads and is accurate to within a few hundred metres. The *Backfire* is a medium-range bomber which the Russians have promised not to use against the United States (they could do it by refuelling the *Backfire* in mid-air). With the SS-20 and the *Backfire* bomber, the Russians have the means to hit any target located within a 2,500–3,500 kilometre distance from the Soviet frontiers.

In order to restore the balance, the Americans are offering their European allies installation of medium-range (1,500–2,000 km) missiles capable of hitting Soviet targets, as well as Cruise missiles which will not be available before 1983, and which

[1] *Military Balance 1979–1980* (International Institute of Strategic Studies, London).

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are banned by the terms of a SALT 2 protocol for the next three years. The experts are recommending 108 Pershing 2 and 464 Cruise missiles, and the governments concerned have to take a decision in December. It is this plan which brought down the wrath of Leonid Brezhnev in his speech and in the final Russo-German communiqué.

As a sop to the Europeans—and, in particular, the West Germans—Brezhnev is undertaking to withdraw 1,000 tanks and 20,000 men. He promises to slow down the deployment of the SS-20—if the Western nations will renounce their own nuclear weapons in the European theatre. The proclaimed withdrawal is meaningless as long as it gives no indication of what is involved—modern or obsolescent tanks? combat divisions or forces of occupation? As for the promise, it remains both vague and unverifiable. According to the Americans, 120 SS-20s have already been deployed; and annual production is up to 50 missiles. (For the *Backfire*, Brezhnev has confirmed to the American negotiators that annual production will not exceed 30.)

Western thinking requires something like an approximate balance of "theatre" nuclear arms, given equality of strength in the central system. Leonid Brezhnev retorts that moving medium-range missiles into Western Europe would mean "a resumption of the arms race", a propagandistic assertion which does not stand up to close scrutiny, and which he puts forward in bellicose language. Even if the NATO countries carry out the complete programme advised by the experts, there is little doubt that the Soviets would retain their clear superiority in medium or intermediate range carriers, both bombers and missiles.

The Pershing 2 and Cruise missiles do not, in my view, constitute any kind of real provocation. The NATO high command does now possess weapons capable of reaching Soviet territory—submarine missiles posted in the European theatre; fighter bomber squadrons stationed in Britain; not to mention the French missiles on the Albion plateau and those carried by French and British submarines. But NATO does not have the equivalent of the SS-20's mobility, safety from detection, and accuracy which makes it capable of hitting the key positions of the Atlantic system with one strike. (If the Cruise missile fulfils the hopes placed in it, it will be equally accurate.)

IN STEP WITH the disappearance of American superiority in the central system, the guarantee of safety provided by the US to Western Europe has, alas, faded. Furthermore the Russians, by achieving superiority both in conventional and nuclear arms in the European theatre, have thereby secured the initiative in the escalation sequence. The NATO countries' efforts to lessen their inferiority in "theatre" nuclear weapons are in keeping with the rationale of approximate balance. There is debate among the experts about the merits of the arms chosen—the Pershing 2 and Cruise missiles. But these weapons would at least provide NATO with the bargaining power needed for the possible SALT 3 negotiations or for the new "European conference" suggested by France.

The German Chancellor has made the installation of medium-range missiles on West German soil subject to their acceptance by another NATO country (like Belgium or the Netherlands). But he has not given even this conditional assent without reluctance. He no longer has the same trust in the America of Jimmy Carter that Dr Adenauer had in the America of Harry Truman or General Eisenhower. His one eye on the West matches another eye equally firmly fixed on the East. It is not that he envisages "leaving the Atlantic alliance" or the European community; or that he has lost interest in the American guarantee. But within the framework which has been maintained ever since the War, he conducts his own Ostpolitik national policy towards the East, concerned as he is about the East-West détente which governs the fate of the Germans in Berlin and the *DDR* and of the German minorities in the Iron Curtain countries.

Helmut Schmidt has been doing his utmost to help Jimmy Carter to get SALT 2 ratified. Schmidt, and by the same token President Giscard d'Estaing, are in favour of SALT in the main because non-ratification would increase the tension between the great powers. For both men, détente is *une fin en soi*; SALT 2, on whatever conditions, is likewise an end in itself, since it contributes towards détente. The Russians see détente purely as a *means*—for example, helpful in purchasing 25 million tons of cereals from the United States. Détente does not inhibit any of their African or Afghan ventures.

Leonid Brezhnev's words are calculated to reinforce the left wing of the SPD, the supporters of Egon Bahr and Herbert Wehner, who are hostile to NATO rearmament and unworried by Russian intentions. His initiative is also threatening to open a rift between the Americans, who are rediscovering the might and expansionism of the USSR, and the Europeans, who have been awarding Brezhnev the benefit of the doubt about good behaviour or even peaceful intentions, either because they believe it or because prudence dictates the semblance of belief.

THE FIRST MOVES in the great game of world armament/disarmament are only beginning. Leonid Brezhnev inveighed against the "neutron bomb"; but it was President Carter, not Chancellor Schmidt, who put a stop to that weapon. Will the Americans and West Germans go through with their common undertaking this time, or will they

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allow themselves to be balked by their own indecision, mutual distrust, and the stick-and-carrot of Leonid Brezhnev?

"Backing down" would be even more meaningful politically than militarily. To give up in response to the thinly veiled threats of Leonid Brezhnev would amount to moral surrender.

WHATEVER the military situation in the coming years, a direct and massive attack on Western Europe remains unlikely. A "surgical operation"—the elimination of some 200–300 key NATO defence points by SS-20 nuclear warheads, limiting so-called "collateral damage" by their accuracy of fire—this kind of prospect belongs to the theoretical scenarios devised by Army staffs. How many missiles would fail to follow the intended trajectory? How many would therefore hit urban centres by mistake? That kind of dice game is not in keeping with traditional Bolshevik behaviour.

What is much more to be feared is the possibility that the European nations, grown conscious of their weakness and yet unable to awaken any sense of concern or danger in the population, should gradually submit to the will of the strongest, the world's greatest military power. The burly chiefs of the swollen Soviet Empire may find themselves credited with prudence, good conduct, concern for domestic welfare, pacifism, and who-knows-what-other virtues. No one will want to look at the record: the role adopted by the Soviet military in the repression of revolts against the Communist leadership in Afghanistan and in the struggle waged by the government of Ethiopia against the Eritreans.

There was a time when statesmen looked at "The Great Globe itself", and it encompassed more than our little Western Extension of the Asian mainland.

FOR SIX YEARS NOW, since 1973, the European economy has been suffering the twin evils of inflation and slow growth. Each nation has come to more or less unsatisfactory terms with rising oil prices, stagnation, or declining buying power. Having said that, however, most Europeans have continued to live as before, in the manner of affluent countries, with millions of cars swarming in their cities and along their highways. Even the Iranian revolution did not trouble public opinion for long.

In France we have been scourging our prime minister, as if some other policy would produce greater growth and enable us to dodge the timid cure of austerity.

The best we can hope would be for the present depression to carry on without some dramatic deterioration. All the European economies depend—the French more than the rest—on oil from the Near and Middle East. In the most favourable hypothesis we shall obtain the necessary amounts of oil, but at a price linked to the price of Western and more or less pro-Soviet government energy increases, "growth at all costs" with an increased deficit and increased inflation would put us more and more under the thumb of our oil suppliers and deprive us of what practical independence we have left. (I do not, of course, refer to juridical or oratorical independence, which remains by definition immaculately intact.)

The other scenario would involve a "second Iran" and new troubles in the Persian Gulf states, leading to an oil famine, unpredictable price rises, and possible Great-Power confrontations. The Soviet Union's new military predominance would not be expressed in anything so hazardous as an attack in Europe. It would influence the course of all the diplomatic or economic crises which might arise anywhere on the planet. In the event of a revolutionary upset, resulting in some sort of anti-Western and more or less pro-Soviet government, in Saudi Arabia, would the United States have either the military means or the political resolve to intervene?

If, as the Washington intelligence agencies have been claiming, Soviet oil production will no longer be able to meet the needs of the "socialist community" after the early 1980s, the battle for the Gulf states will represent a life-and-death issue for both power blocs. A second defeat anything like what the West has suffered in Iran would be something of a *coup de grâce*. With no fuel and no machines, Europe would not die—but it would have to make far-reaching changes in its way of life, and perhaps also in its way of government.

The Israeli-Egyptian treaty, Begin's intransigence over the West Bank, and the small-scale war in southern Lebanon are all pieces of the puzzle. Even if the Americans and Europeans knew what to do in order to bring about "a general settlement", the instability of the Gulf states would persist. Before the retreat from "East of Suez" a few thousand British soldiers had more effect on world history, and at a lower cost, than a handful of thermonuclear bombs.

IN ORDER TO SURVIVE FREE after 1984, Europe must first become fully conscious of the American decline and of its own state of military weakness and economic vulnerability. In the 1930s the threat was on our front doorstep, staring straight at us, and yet it went unrecognised. Today it is diffuse, shifting, and unpredictable. Every country from the Suez Canal to Pakistan is astir with revolutionary movements, some of them inspired by religion, the rest by Marxist ideology.

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The Soviets are closer to that theatre than the United States, and they have no hesitation about dispatching Red Army military advisers or Castro's Cuban soldiers there. Interrupting oil supplies would be a far cheaper and safer way of bringing Western Europe to heel than by launching the nuclear warheads of the SS-20.

As for France, it now relies on submarines (whose missiles are operative solely against towns), as once it relied on the Maginot Line.

Short Serpentine at the Lizard

A various and most questionable animal
Not to be caught easily with the left hand,
Earthworms sculpting images of themselves

Out of bowels, coiled seamanlike, in fresh earth.
The rain splashes on the window, hatching snakes
On dribbling glass that scent out mulch,

The great soaked tobacco of the grassheaps;
The fresh earth is speaking aloud to me.
The earthworm has the globe in one embrace,

The river Kaka, the swallowing earth-mouth
(And the Kak drops from God ascending the seasons,
His wormcast, bright banks of flowers to us).

So worm eases round the equator, it is
Both latitude and longitude,
It is the sea-serpent, and at that size

It sings triple-bass and flashes with lightning,
Coils seamanlike the high silver clouds.
Its bristles with which it walks are the streaming pine-trees,

That lightning is the telegraphese chained in its nerves,
Its smaller versions dwindle through the soil-grains.
It swims rivers copious as itself without fins,

By undulant expertise; you may tread on the worm-cast
But you cannot outrun the serpent, not
On your horse. It unpicks the fingers in the graveyards,

We are compressed into it as the night slides on,
Into darkness under its belly, the crooked one,
Called crooked but as smooth as wheels.

The carver sells me a memento lighthouse at the Lizard;
"What is it carved of?" "Why, Serpentine."

Peter Redgrove

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Edwin Brock

Two journeys

Commuter

Manningtree's two swans
turn their necks into the estuary;
two ducks cut across the mudflat
to where dead elms start another
farm: everything is arranged.

This journey nails us to
a single line, crowned with
fierce gorse and pierced to make
the ornamental pond at Chelmsford.

If I stretch my arm and touch
your fingertips, it is the space
between us. This is the fear our
nerves now move along, and
it is a way of seeing.

Fifty times the trees have opened
into summer: the short blossom
and the pollen itch; it is not
enough to be aware of breathing.

With this year's money I will buy
a picture for the stain upon
our living room: it will show
two swans at Manningtree with
their necks turned into pain.

Everything is like this: tomorrow
has arrived at exactly the point
where today ended; Manningtree is
an autobiography which becomes
its own distraction, and I will
sign this paper as a kind of truce.

En route

On the way I heard Whistling Rufus
performed by a station porter
on a miles-from-anywhere platform
on the Norfolk-Suffolk border.

The wind and water of East Anglia
caged us in late winter; doors
slammed on it and we waited for
our time to come. Whistling Rufus

was six feet tall, raw boned and
walked in a way that described porters:
he held his watch in one hand,
whistle in the other and as we

rolled away blew this chorus
between them. For half the length
of the platform his tune tied us to
bent grass and birds tumbling on

the teeming wind—until each note
broke away and we too were
blown up the same coastline.
I hadn't heard that tune whistled

since I was a boy: it was like
some great John Henry calling across
the flat sky to where trains turn
on timetables and old ladies doze.

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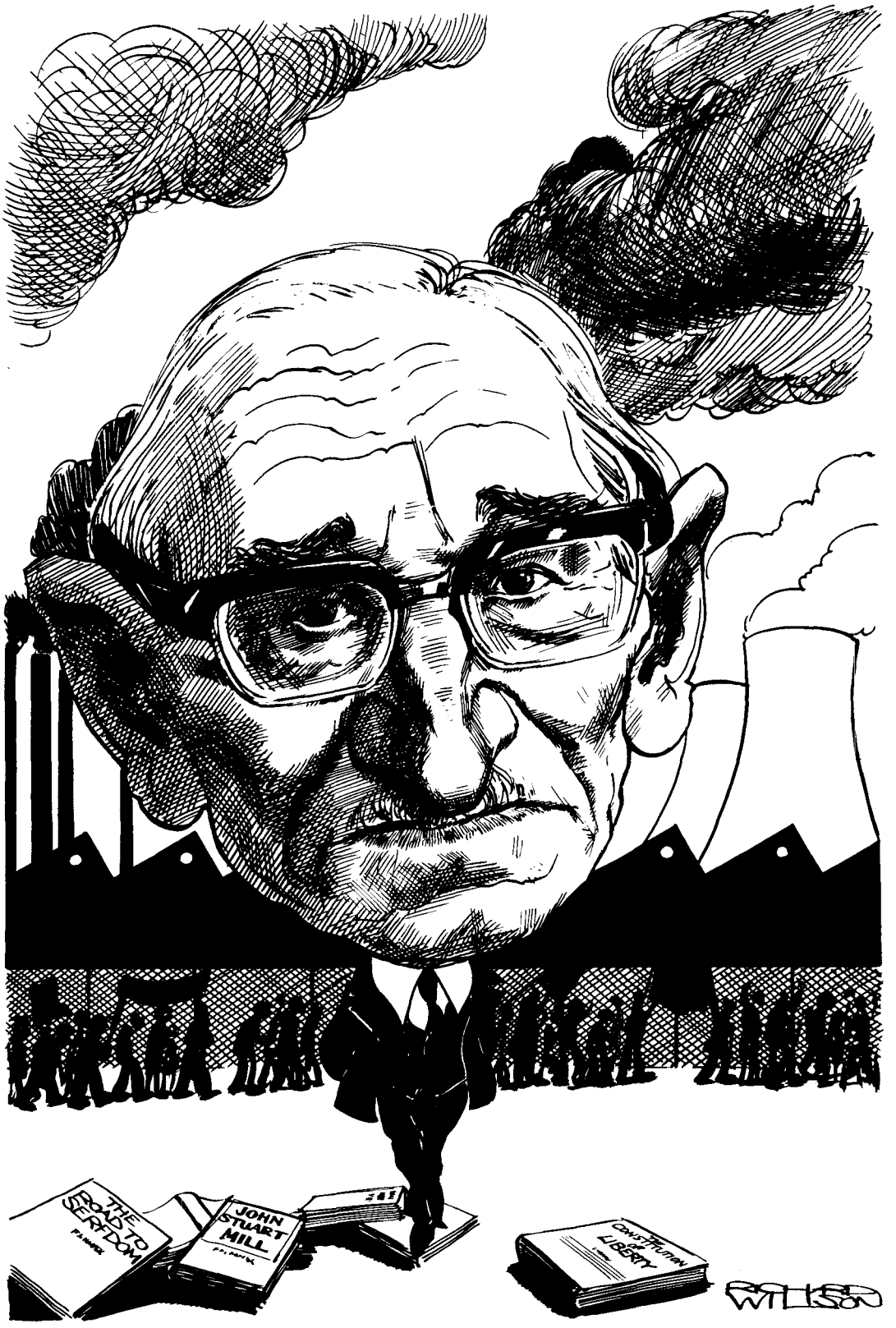

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Hayek, the New Right, & the Crisis of Social Democracy

By Samuel Brittan

SINCE THE PUBLICATION of his *Road to Serfdom* in 1944, Friedrich Hayek has been cursed by sneerers, who dismiss everything he has to say without giving it a hearing, and even more by admirers, who agree with it before they have studied it, and regard it mainly as a highbrow stick with which to beat the Left.

Yet there are many reasons for trying to come to terms with what he has been saying. The completion of *The Political Order of a Free People*,[1] the third and last volume of his *Law, Legislation and Liberty*, provides a suitable opportunity for an interim assessment. The emergence of what has been called "the New Right", symbolised by events such as the victory of the tax-cutting Proposition 13 in the Californian Referendum and of Mrs Thatcher in the UK general election of 1979, makes it topical to do so. So, of course, do the retreat from Keynesian economics and the collapse of post-War full employment policies in one country after another, which Hayek has been warning would happen since the time when these policies existed only as aspirations in wartime White Papers.

Although Hayek's teachings are by no means identical with those of "the New Right", and can indeed be used to provide an effective critique of it, there is clearly something in common. It can hardly be a coincidence that Hayek was cited far more frequently than any other author in the list of favourite books published by "Aims of Industry" for its "Freedom Book Fair" of 1979. Some of the items that appear puzzling in the doctrines and practices of "the New Right" are also to be found in Hayek's writings; and it is more interesting to make the effort of understanding through the works of a major thinker than by examining the contradictions of political practitioners or their journalistic apologists.

Most important for all, there is a great deal to be learned from Hayek's teachings, even by—or especially by—people who do not consider themselves either Hayekians or members of "the New Right." Hayek himself has not made it any easier for them by his explicit assumption in writings over three-and-a-half decades that something called "Socialism", which includes the doctrines of Social Democrats—and indeed of non-Thatcherite Conservatives—is the intellectual and political enemy. If Hayek believes, as he does, that socialists and their pale pink imitators in other parties are guilty of "scientific error" (he never doubts their moral goodwill), liable to usher in an age of barbarism, it has been his duty to say so and not to shelter, as so many academics do, behind a bogus impartiality. Nevertheless, in my own view, "Collectivism" would be a more accurate name than socialism for the evils which Hayek has diagnosed, and would indicate more clearly that its practitioners extend throughout the political spectrum.

Another obstacle is the elusiveness of much of Hayek's writings and the lack of examples. The clarity of *The Road to Serfdom* is, alas, not typical of his other work; although it is only fair to add that his obscurities are far more worth pondering than most of the trivia with which other economists regale us and which are forgotten within a very short time.

THE TASK OF ASSESSMENT is further compounded by the fact that Hayek's writings cover many subjects ranging from (to take a few examples) the philosophy of perception and social biology to jurisprudence and currency competition. They are not in water-tight compartments. The author sees important links between them. But they have developed over the years and are thus to be found scattered over many different works. Indeed the newcomer might do well to look at Norman Barry's

[1] *The Political Order of a Free People*. By F. A. HAYEK. Routledge, £5.95.

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study *Hayek's Social and Economic Philosophy*[2] before reading the original work. Barry lists the main ideas with exemplary clarity. He also puts them in the context of mainstream doctrines with which the reader is more likely to be familiar. While essentially sympathetic, Barry lists the major difficulties and contradictions. The main shortcoming—if it is that—is that he does not express a view on the relative importance of Hayek's various doctrines or give an overall judgment of his own on the whole philosophy.

At a more technical level, Barry overstresses the relevance of Hayek's subjectivist and axiomatic philosophy of social science, before he came under the influence of Sir Karl Popper, important though this phase was for Hayek's own intellectual development. Hayek's later critique of bogus quantification based on the complexity of the phenomena studied has more to tell us now. His essential point is that we cannot count on the good fortune of being able to discover by direct observation simple quantitative regularities between economic variables—but it is still possible and worthwhile to formulate general rules. For instance, economic theory can tell us that we cannot maintain a fixed rate of exchange and at the same time maintain an independent monetary policy with a national price level objective. But this does not mean that we can predict where the exchange rate will go if the latter option is chosen.

The breakdown of one supposed numerical relationship after another in macroeconomics in the last decade has made this view far less eccentric than it appeared in the heyday of econometric predictions. Keynesian-type relations between consumption and income, and monetarist predictions of "the demand for money" have alike failed to give even rough enough approximations of use for policy. Writers themselves reared in the quantitative tradition have recently begun to stress that the relationships in their equations ("parameters", to use this word for once in its correct sense) are not stable, and depend on such forces as the climate of expectations and the policies that the authorities are believed to be following. Much of the discredit into which economics has fallen would fail to surprise readers of Hayek's methodological papers of the late 1950s and early 1960s.[3]

In this essay I can only touch on a few themes, starting in areas where Hayek seems to me to be misguided, but still illuminating, and then passing on to areas of greater agreement. The reader is warned that the space devoted to each topic has nothing to do with its relative importance.

1. The New Right

THE NEW RIGHT places a good deal of emphasis, alien to many market economists, on a return to "the old values." The less clearly one tries to define the phrase "old values" the more accurate one will be. But it clearly covers a belief in patriotism, authority of the traditional kind centering round the family, the school, the business manager, and, above all, the police and army. These are felt to be legitimate in contrast to bureaucrats and tax inspectors, who are regarded as *ersatz* authority figures, all too ready to act as subversives themselves. It has always been an intellectual paradox that the non-Muscovite Left favours freedom in everything but economics, while the Right is sympathetic to freedom only in the economic sphere. The evolution of the New Left and the New Right has not dissolved the paradox created by their old parents.[4]

Where apparently contrasting attributes are found among practising politicians, or bodies of electors, one can do little but note the paradox and pass on. A vast number of different permutations of beliefs on different subjects have at one time or another been grouped together. Among some ascetic religious sects "plain living" has been linked, with apparent logic, to an abhorrence of technical progress. Among others such progress has been highly prized, for apparently equally cogent reasons. Nor is it surprising that middle-class Conservative voters should favour market forces for pay differentials, but advocate state intervention to reduce the cost of home mortgages. It is always a possibility to create a distinction between such cases and thus rationalise an apparent anomaly, if only one thinks hard enough.

[2] *Hayek's Social and Economic Philosophy*. By NORMAN BARRY. Macmillan, £12.

[3] Reprinted in F. A. Hayek, *Studies in Philosophy, Politics and Economics* (Routledge, 1967).

[4] How far the Conservatives are from any general sympathy with freedom was brought out clearly by Patrick Cormack, MP, when opposing a motion by a Labour Member for leave to bring in a Bill to abolish corporal punishment in schools. "There is something to be said for the old adage that if one spares the rod one spoils the child. . . ." He then attacked the "increasingly lackadaisical, permissive and libertarian atmosphere pervading many of our schools" (*Hansard*, 20 January 1976). This is not the language of a man with a profound attachment to freedom, pointing out that some derogations are required for minors.

Mr Cormack turns up again as the editor of *Right Turn* (London, 1978) in which seven ex-Socialists and one ex-Liberal explained that they were switching to the Conservatives because of the threat to freedom from Labour's current drift. Mr Cormack's earlier utterance—together with the lack of repudiation by any liberal Conservative, and the presence of *not one* Conservative Member on the list of MPs voting for leave to bring in the anti-corporal punishment Bill—convinced me after earlier hesitations that the Conservative Party was decidedly not where I wished to be. I shall always be grateful to Mr Cormack for shining (however unintentionally) the amber light in good time.

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2. Evolution & Liberty

YET WHEN HAYEK himself combines libertarian economic beliefs with authoritarian inclinations in other directions, it is time to sit up and take notice. I may claim to have contributed in a mild way to the revival of interest in Hayek with my own *Capitalism and the Permissive Society* (1973), which came out in favour of *both* of these things. The first page of the first chapter of Hayek's classic *Constitution of Liberty* (1960) starts with the sentence:

> "We are concerned in this book with that condition of men in which coercion of some by others is reduced as much as possible."

He contrasts his idea of freedom with Ignatius Loyola's ideal of the Jesuit who should be "as soft wax" in the hands of his superior, putting all his fervour into "executing zealously and exactly what he is ordered."

Yet familiarity with Hayek's work makes it clear that he himself could not possibly regard a title endorsing the "permissive society" as anything but a distortion of his message. Indeed the Epilogue of the final volume of his last major work, *Law, Legislation and Liberty*, includes a fierce denunciation of permissiveness in general and educational permissiveness in particular. "Permissive education" has become a cant slogan covering a wide range of different practices. Yet it is remarkable that someone who wishes to reduce the role of coercion in human affairs should express unqualified hostility, although not in as crude a way as Patrick Cormack, to those who wish to reduce the role of coercion in the bringing-up of young people.

Nor is this a unique example from a late phase of Hayek's writing. In *The Constitution of Liberty* itself there are passages endorsing peacetime conscription—in striking contrast to Milton Friedman's personal lobbying against the US draft. Indeed, in a much earlier essay, *Individualism and Economic Order* (1948), Hayek praises the conformism of the inter-War British public school student, in contrast to the personal diversities cultivated by their Continental counterparts.

3. Evolutionary Values

THE MOST REVEALING PART of Hayek's new trilogy is the Appendix to the third volume entitled "The Three Sources of Human Values." The source which Hayek wants to emphasise is evolved social institutions. Not every part of behaviour is either hereditary or the result of deliberate intention. It can also result from traditions, rules, and institutions, which are the product of a social rather than a biological evolution, and are thus the result of human action, but not of conscious human intention.

In contrast to libertarians, such as Milton Friedman, who take liberty as an absolute value, Hayek is quite ruthless in saying that the test of evolutionary rules is the simple one of success, identified, in turn, with progress. Resistance to the commercialisation and repressions of modern civilisation, whether from the romantic Right or the libertarian Left, arises from our tribal inheritance and impossible longings to get back. Hence Hayek's deep-seated opposition to the teachings of Freud and their attempt to bring into the open instinctive or unconscious longings and desires.

To those of us brought up on Hayek's definition of freedom as the absence of coercion, his condemnation of permissiveness comes as a shock. What he really dislikes about educational or social permissiveness, and has frequently condemned in the Bloomsbury of Keynes's day, is the notion that rules which cannot be rationally explained do not have to be observed; or that people of any age should "reason why" before accepting rules—conventional as well as legal. The argument, familiar from earlier writings, stems from the belief that conventional rules embody more inherited knowledge and experience than any individual could be capable of ascertaining himself.

Thus while Hayek's ultimate values are those of the radical apostle of human progress, his ethical philosophy is highly conservative. He faces the question of how rules should change; and maintains that we break them at our peril. Innovators may experiment with new rules or practices, but always at their own risk. The test is whether they can get away with them. Moreover, the pioneer of new rules can proceed on only one or two fronts at a time. The condition of his success is his acceptance of the great bulk of other rules which, like his fellows, he follows blindly.

This looks like pretty standard conservative philosophy with which Edmund Burke would have felt at home. But there are important ways in which Hayekian social biology is very different from old conservatism. First, he actually welcomes the disturbance and change of the last two centuries. These have, he believes, been brought about by individual effort and initiative within a known framework of rules. Gradual changes in the rules themselves will, Hayek believes, further progress so long as they are spontaneous. But frequent deliberate tampering with the rules by over-ambitious reformers will, he fears, put an end to the whole development that began with the Renaissance and received a new lease of life from the Industrial Revolution.

The interesting question about this blend of radical evolutionary fervour and conservative insistence on rule observance is why someone holding it should regard himself as a libertarian, which Hayek undoubtedly does. Not only that, but he is

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recognised as such by a number of others whose entitlement to the label cannot be questioned.

The libertarian element is injected into Hayek's philosophy by the assumption that rules which have evolved through custom or common law will in practice allow a large amount of individual freedom. Certain courses of action and behaviour will be forbidden; but, apart from those, people will really be free to "do their own thing." Granted the premise that evolution is towards libertarian rules, then all the arguments about not seeking to impose a conscious, artificial pattern on our inheritance point in a libertarian direction. But liberty is, in the last analysis, an instrumental value in the service not of happiness or welfare, but of progress—material and intellectual—seen as an end in itself.

4. Towards a Critique

HOW ACCEPTABLE is this outlook? Hayek's ultimate criterion is open to serious question. By "progress" he basically means movement and increase of complexity (in the biological sense). This is not a self-evident ethical yardstick. There are more important things (e.g. happiness) than "the evolution of the human race", even assuming that we can identify it unambiguously when we see it. Advance may be for the bad; and it is not a sufficient condemnation of intervention in the rules, of even a highly liberal society, to say that it may "hold up progress."

Utilitarianism is a more plausible and attractive alternative starting point, although also incomplete as a social philosophy. It can be interpreted, as Jeremy Bentham originally did, as "the greatest happiness for the greatest number." Or it can be interpreted as the maximum satisfaction of individual preferences—letting as many people as possible have as much as possible of whatever it is that they want.

Of course utilitarianism has its problems. "The greatest number" of Bentham's formula can hardly be taken literally. To increase satisfaction by increasing population is not a very attractive aim. Even if it is interpreted to mean "the maximisation of welfare per head", there are obstinate problems. It is not only the *average* satisfaction in a community that matters but its distribution. A high average level of satisfaction is insufficient compensation for the existence of an oppressed or destitute minority. (On top of this are the well-known problems of interpersonal comparisons and the meaning to be attached to want satisfaction with a changing population and changing tastes.)

Nevertheless, utilitarianism does at least have the virtue of taking as its ultimate criterion the individual and his needs, wants, or desires, as expressed in his behaviour. Evolutionism has at least as many difficulties of definition and formulation, but has a less humane starting point.[5]

But it is not merely the outside critic who has difficulties with Hayek's rule-bound Evolutionism. Hayek has difficulty himself. If there is an inbred wisdom, not apparent to the naked eye, in the evolution of common law or common custom, why deny this hidden wisdom to more interventionist or authoritarian structures? After all, institutions such as rent control, price control, a large nationalised sector, and heavy progressive taxation have existed in many countries for generations and have often evolved gradually. Might they not contain their own wisdom, not obvious to Hayek when writing as an economist? And will not, say, the abolition of rent control in Britain—let alone the reintroduction of capitalism, or free elections, in the Soviet Union—set in train all sorts of events not foreseeable by the simple-minded democrat or free-market economist who looks only at immediate consequences? Indeed are not Hayek's own economic arguments for free markets as superior ways of disseminating information and coordinating activity put into jeopardy by Hayek's philosophical insistence on our invincible ignorance of longer-term consequences? The introduction of a free market—say in the transmission of television programmes—can have remote effects on values, tastes, and behaviour never suspected by the economist who thinks in terms of satisfying existing consumer preferences.

Indeed, nothing could smack more of social engineering and be less respectful of slowly emerging rules and practices than Hayek's two most recent policy suggestions. One is for the competitive circulation of rival privately-issued currencies. The other is for two parliamentary assemblies, elected in highly novel ways: the first concerned with the passing of laws and the second with supervising the policy and administration of the government of the day.

These contradictions can be resolved in a formal way by saying that, normally, spontaneous social evolution is the best way to change society. But occasionally social organisms, like natural ones, develop diseases, and drastic surgery may then be necessary. The problem then is to say who is to be entrusted with the diagnosis. (It is rather similar to the problem with the Marxist system, under which human beliefs are determined entirely by class status. But Marx and his disciples have somehow

[5] The classic objection of the Evolutionist to the Utilitarian is that "It is better to be Socrates unhappy than a pig happy." But the argument is irresolvable. It is part of being Socrates that the happiness of the pig is denied to him; and the idea of taking a drug such as Huxley's *soma*, which would induce continual feelings of joy, would be so excruciatingly painful to Socrates *ex ante* that he would be wise on utilitarian grounds not to do so. On the other hand, the pig does not, by definition, know what he is missing.

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managed to escape from this class determination, and they alone are able to analyse society "objectively.")

It is more fruitful to avoid such artificial reconciliations and to accept that Hayek is attracted to two different political philosophies: classical liberalism (based on limited government, free markets, and the rule of law) and a conservative philosophy which stresses tradition and the hidden wisdom of existing institutions. When in some golden age—say Gladstonian England, as seen through nostalgic spectacles—the prevailing tradition was itself that of classical liberalism the two systems of Hayek might seem in harmony. When prevailing constitutions are authoritarian or collectivist, there is tension between the two ideals.

5. *Alternative Approaches*

WHAT ARE THE MAIN alternatives for those who find the Hayekian outlook, so far from displaying the anarchism of which it is accused by ignorant critics, too authoritarian in many elements? Even if the evolutionary ethics are removed, individual freedom is left to depend on Hayek's writing on "the Rule of Law"—by which he means the generality of rules. This is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for a free society.

One alternative is the thoroughgoing libertarianism of certain Americans. Some young libertarians (including Milton Friedman's son, David) call themselves "anarcho-capitalists" and believe that personal safety and property can be secured by private armies and police forces; and that the way to choose between rival rules of law is competition, including competition between courts, in which the better system will gain adherents and be enforced in private bargains.[6] The arguments used are often ingenious and subtle. But the reality which corresponds to such proposals is too much like the warring private armies of Renaissance Italy, or the feuding factions of the Mafia and the Red Brigade in the Italy of today. These are potentially even more oppressive than many authoritarian governments—and hardly a model for reformers.

Those libertarians who wisely retain the idea of state authority would confine it to "night watchmen" activities, mainly law and order, and defence. Such writers are far more clear-cut in their policy views than Hayek. But they achieve this clarity by advocating thorough going *laissez-faire*.[7] There would certainly be no conscription, no anti-drugs legislation, and no interference in private sexual behaviour. But there would also be no social security—not even the provision of the barest minimum—and nothing remotely resembling a health service. There would be no place for town-and-country planning rules. Attempts to limit the spillover effect of one man's use of space on his neighbours would be confined to what could be achieved by a suitable framework of property rights with a wider concept of damages than exists at present.

On most issues of permissiveness *versus* authority I find myself on the side of the American-style libertarians. But when it comes to the redistribution of income to those at the lower end of the income and property scale, I would go further than Hayek himself, or most middle-of-the-road politicians, in the direction of a negative income tax or social dividend. The libertarians are not necessarily lacking in personal compassion; but their system is. Redistribution in any democratic society depends on altruism or solidarity on the part of the more fortunate citizens. But whether one thinks of the relief of poverty or (more ambitiously) of income redistribution, personal charity is not enough—for reasons of economic logic. Redistribution is, like defence, a "public good." This means that there is little incentive for the individual to provide it. I might be—indeed would be—willing to pay a voluntary contribution to transfer some of my income to the poor as part of a compact with millions of others. But it would not be rational for me to do so, to the same extent, on my own.[8] The benefit to the income of the poor would be negligible, and the loss of my own income and welfare substantial. (These very elementary considerations are discussed in contemporary economic literature in off-puttingly technical articles about "Pareto-optimal redistribution.")

SIMILAR ARGUMENTS about public goods apply to support for the Arts. There is a great deal of contemporary music which I, along with many other concert-goers and record-buyers, am quite unable to appreciate. But I accept the arguments for

[6] David Friedman, *The Machinery of Freedom* (1973).

[7] E.g. Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (1974).

[8] Failure to take this into account is a blemish on an otherwise excellent and eloquent restatement of Hayekian doctrines in *Liberty and Language*. By GEOFFREY SAMPSON. Oxford University Press, £5.75.

Mr Sampson's statement comes as an extended digression in the course of a book arguing (*a*) that Noam Chomsky's brand of egalitarian anarchism involves not freedom but "the total subordination of individuals to a collective will", and (*b*) that contrary to Chomsky's claim it does not follow from the latter's linguistic discoveries (to which Mr Sampson provides the most comprehensible introduction which I have seen).

But his own exposition of classical liberalism, in many ways the best summary available, is marred by opposition to even minimal state provision of a fallback income for those without resources, as well as by subtly argued but still wrong-headed opposition to "laws forbidding the employment of young children in coal mines." On neither point is he in line with Hayek.

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supporting it, and I will pay my share if other taxpayers will do the same; passing round the hat is not a substitute. There will be other activities which I would be unwilling to support on a club basis, but other taxpayers would not be. A lot of state activity can be understood as a substitute for a network of large-scale contracts, which it would be prohibitively expensive to negotiate privately, both because of transaction costs and because of the incentive to act as a free rider and leave others to finance the activities of which one privately approves.

The argument against state intervention and subsidies is not that they should not take place at all; but that, for reasons endemic to the political process, much real-world intervention impairs rather than improves the unaided market, and the redistributions effected are inefficient, largely self-cancelling, taken at the behest of interest groups, and justified by no ethical principles whatsoever.

Moreover, the "equality" which is professed as an ideal by even quite "right-wing" Social Democrats—it was Roy Jenkins who said in 1952 "Socialism is about Equality", Tony Crosland continued to believe this to the end, and it is also assumed without question in many current academic works—is an ambiguous and dangerous goal. Equality owes its popularity to the widespread sentiment in favour of "levelling-up" the incomes of the poor. But considered as an arithmetical goal the "levelling-down" of the better-off, or the removal of opportunities to rise, also counts as a contribution to equality—even if it actually makes the poor worse-off because of its effects on incentives, and thus on state revenues available for redistribution.

Thus, because of its ambiguity and the range of policies it justifies, "equality" has too often become a respectable pretext for envy, malice, and jealousy, as well as for compassion. It should be dropped as a social objective in favour of more explicit statements of redistributive goals.

6. *Dilemmas of Freedom*

ALTHOUGH MY SYMPATHIES are on the side of liberty when it clashes with equality (e.g. the right to spend income on private medical treatment or on first-class travel tickets), the treatment of liberty in the classical liberal texts has come to worry me increasingly. The mistake of classical liberals and, even more, of the New Right conservatives is to equate *all* authority with *state* authority. Oppression in an Old People's or Children's Home, or even in the family, can be just as great.

As John Stuart Mill pointed out, conformism and the intolerance of individual divergence in small local communities can in practice be the greatest obstacles to individual liberty. The option of "voting with one's feet" and finding elsewhere a community to one's own taste, on which many modern free-market writers base their preference for local over central government, exists mainly for prime-age adult males, who make up a minority of the total population. Hayek's ideal of abstract impersonal law is more likely to be applied—admittedly, at some bureaucratic cost—in centrally-administered federal or national services than at a local government or community level. The trouble there is that everybody knows everyone else; and although it is easier to take account of particular circumstances, it also becomes easier to bend general principles in favour of those who matter locally and against those considered a nuisance.

Libertarian doctrine applies most convincingly either to "ageless" isolated individuals or adult heads-of-family. It is much less convincing for the many people who are too young, or too old, or too dependent, or too muddled to "stand on their own feet", and to take out their own insurance against the vicissitudes of life.

The difficulty of the modern libertarian is to find a way of combining the Christian-socialist awareness that we are most of us very vulnerable and terribly dependent on the help and sympathy of others, with the equally important insight that the attempt to coerce someone into being a tool or instrument of another is a great evil.

Mill's distinction between "self-regarding" and "other-regarding" action is an essential protection against public interference with private behaviour among consenting adults. But by itself it is insufficient. Almost anything that anyone does is liable to "affect others" unless in an enclosed space behind curtains. Is liberty to make offensive gestures to others in the streets, or to fornicate in public, or to be smelly or unsightly in crowded places, a basic human right? Do I have to enlist to fight for these things because I find the military sadism shown in *Chips with Everything*, the public-school horrors of *If*, or the use of the closed shop to bar people from a chosen profession equally offensive?

A DISPOSITION TOWARDS personal freedom, both as an end in itself and as a means to other ends, does not imply that it should be the only political value. There may at times have to be a trade-off between freedom and other goals. The heavy (and arbitrarily enforced) penalties on all soft drugs in most countries, when people are rightly allowed to drink and smoke at their own risk, reflect mainly intolerance and prejudice. But a recognition of this does not commit one to legalising heroin; nor to adopting on such matters a completely *a priori* attitude towards the law which would treat all research findings with disdain.

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What label, then, is to be attached to someone who is attracted to both freedom and to utilitarian ideals, who accepts redistribution but not equality, who sees a case for a good deal of state intervention and subsidy, but finds nearly all the interventions of the last decade or so (and a good deal of the earlier type, such as rent control) pernicious and misguided?

In the end I can think of no better label than "social democrat", but a social democrat of an oddball variety, who believes that neither the man in Whitehall nor the local social worker necessarily knows best, yet also does not find "leaving other people to go to hell in their own way" an attractive social morality. A rational social democrat will, on many economic issues, have more sympathy with Margaret Thatcher or Raymond Barre or William Simon than with their critics (or rather with what these "right-wing radicals" would do if they really had the convictions they were supposed to have, as well as the courage and political strength to follow them). Indeed my criticism of Mrs Thatcher's intellectual mentor, Sir Keith Joseph, would be that he is cutting too few subsidies rather than too many—although I would use some of the resulting savings to relieve the pressure on the health and other personal social services rather than just reduce the basic rate of tax.

That kind of social democracy finds no market in any wing of the British Labour Party, and is practised rather than preached by Helmut Schmidt's German Social Democrats. The fact that this position should seem so eccentric in English-speaking or Latin countries, and so out-of-keeping with what political practitioners in "the centre" are actually saying, has some bearing on the crisis through which social democracy is passing. It is a crisis on which Hayek's writings shed a great deal of light, whether one is a fully-fledged Hayekian or not.

7. Market Signals

THE FIRST CONTRIBUTION of Hayek that I want to stress is his treatment of economics as a social science rather than as an exercise in the optimum allocation of resources. For a long time he was almost alone among market economists in being concerned with the effect of the market system on the evolution and stability of society. Whereas most economists, whether of the Left or of the Right, concentrate on mathematical exercises (sometimes verbal mathematics), trying to work out "solutions" in given conditions, Hayek has been interested in Markets as examples of human institutions, like Language or Law, which have evolved without any conscious plan on anyone's part.

For several decades, Hayek has stressed that markets are means of disseminating information diffused among millions of human beings (who will not be conscious of all the information they possess). This information is transmitted in the form of signals—price changes in flexible markets, but also shortages and surpluses where price changes are delayed by habit or law.[9] They also provide an incentive to meet unsatisfied needs and to move resources from where they are no longer required. Wants, techniques, and resources are not given, but are constantly changing—in part due to the activities of entrepreneurs who suggest possibilities, (whether digital recordings or cheap stand-by transatlantic flights) which people did not know existed before. The market system is a "discovery technique" rather than a way of allocating known resources among known wants with known techniques. The latter problem could, in principle at least, be solved by computers on the entirely libertarian principles that people's preferences should be satisfied to the maximum possible extent for any given distribution of income. No computer can predict, however, the emergence of new knowledge, original ideas, or commercial innovations—and people's reactions to them.

Over and above this, the market provides a method of coordinating the activities of millions of people and of solving problems without a vast apparatus of political decision and of governmental enforcement. The very existence of this self-regulating system is quite unsuspected by 99% of the population, who (to the extent that they think about these matters at all) assume that we must have a national or international "policy" for energy, jobs, productivity, or whatever other problem hits the newspaper headlines.

THIS VIEW OF MARKETS as a discovery procedure and coordinating mechanism is now common property to many economists, especially in the United States (away from the Eastern seaboard). But it is still "Double Dutch" to large numbers of Oxbridge graduates who have been brought up to suppose that they have only to diagnose a departure from some theoretical optimum (so-called perfect competition) in a market to believe they have made a case for government intervention—without asking whether the human beings who will have to carry out that intervention have the knowledge or the motivation actually to improve matters. Too often the defects of real world markets are compared with the hypothetical action of a benevolent and omniscient dictator (as frequently—in the more technical writings—for reasons of mathematical convenience as from any deeply-held convictions).

Here, as elsewhere, the Hayekian approach

[9] The "but also" is my own, not Hayek's gloss. The case is stronger if this concession is made.

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opens up rather than solves problems. Hayek sees the market network as a gradually evolving social system rather than as a mathematical solution to the problem of resource allocation on the basis of known, certain, and unchanging information. But just like Language and Law—those other products of social evolution with which Hayek makes explicit comparison—the transmission and incentive mechanisms of the Market can be improved. So shifting attention from the static allocation of resources to "the market as a discovery procedure" does not remove the issue of intervention.

Unfortunately, much of recent government intervention does not make any sort of sense in terms of improving the market, either in the textbook sense as an instrument of allocation, or in the Hayekian sense of a signalling system. The roots of such intervention lie in the defects of the political system. The economic rationalisations given make no sense at all, and they seem to come from people who, far from wanting to improve markets, have never even heard that they exist, and feel they must rush in with a physical and collectivist "solution" to any "problem."

Examples range from the supposed importance of Exports to the assumed necessity for an Energy policy. Included in the list would be the encouragement of savings as a patriotic virtue, the post-War cult of boasting about "how many houses" governments of differing political parties have "built", the encouragement of home ownership, and indeed the need for a Housing policy at all. It would encompass "the Importance of the Farmer", so dear even to the most free-market of Tory Governments.

The list of conventional policies to be condemned can be made to sound heretical, far-out, or downright bizarre. But it is based on very elementary textbook economics as interpreted by iconoclasts who prefer to turn their iconoclasm against the world rather than the textbooks. One does not in the least have to be on the radical Right to accept such a critique. This critique would be compatible with support for a much higher degree of redistribution of income and wealth than we now have, which could only be at the expense of the large mass of voters in the middle. It would also be compatible with much collective action to provide genuine public goods or to discourage anti-social spillovers. (Examples range from the protection of City Centres and spending on the Arts, to improvements of the Health Service, and better state-financed technical training.)

It is instructive to contrast the knee-jerk hostility to markets of many Western social democrats with the Communist economic reformers who are thoroughly disillusioned with "central planning" and are trying to bring in price- and profit-incentives. Tempting though it is to say that Communist economists in Hungary and Poland have a better understanding of market forces than Heathite members of a Conservative Government, one should go slowly at this point. To publish a set of rules asking the managers of state enterprises to behave *"as if"* they were profit-maximising entrepreneurs in competitive private industry ignores the actual personal motivations faced by these men; and this approach became badly unstuck in the British nationalised industries. You do not make a horse into a zebra merely by painting stripes on its back.

HAYEK LONG AGO pointed out that "Market Socialism" among state enterprises might provide a few mechanical rules such as "Invest where the expected return exceeds a market rule of interest plus a risk premium." But it would not tell us whether to believe the estimates of return made by state managers. Nor would it help to decide who should be allowed to bid for the available funds, or how new entrants with completely different ideas about techniques, products, and return were to be accommodated. The benefits of the market system can be combined with a considerable state sector and a good deal of redistribution. But they cannot be as easily divorced from "capitalism" as some academics (who do not want to arouse the hostility provoked by this word) would like. Above all, one should avoid the trap of supposing that the copying of a few Western textbook rules (such as marginal cost pricing) would eliminate the Gulag Archipelago. By all means, encourage Communist countries to try to make their economic systems more efficient and humane. But there is a limit to what can be achieved by economic liberalisation alone; and I suspect that many Eastern European economists would be shouting this from the housetops were they but free to do so.

The frequent fallacy of, for instance, radical playwrights in the West is not that they expose hypocrisy, shallowness, and double standards of society. It is that they jump from the demonstration (many things are wrong) to the inference (evils are due to "capitalism" rather than to authority in general). To decide whether the capitalist elements increase the abuse of authority or act as a check on it requires considerable penetration of economic issues. Writers who are avowedly bored by economic analysis should not be encouraged to pronounce on them. Their attempt to do so discredits the exposure of evils which are very real, though wrongly attributed to "capitalism."

UNFORTUNATELY, MANY WESTERN social democratic politicians have reacted to recent strains in their mixed economies by retreating towards an anti-intellectual interventionism. The Bad Godesberg programme, under which the

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German Social Democrats (in 1959) formally dropped the demand for a centrally-directed economy, has become less and less typical of the approach of Social Democrats or even middle-of-the-roaders in other political parties. As a result economists wanting to make intelligent use of the market place are likely to find their most sympathetic audiences on the New Right, especially in the English-speaking countries.

But this should make them particularly on the look-out for underlying divergencies. Professional economists who are sympathetic to market forces put the emphasis on the price mechanism (e.g. letting gas prices or mortgage prices rise in order to ration demand and stimulate supply) and on the profitability test (which is also valid for state industry or workers' co-ops). By contrast, New Right politicians put the emphasis on reduced taxes and government spending cuts, without too many fine nuances about marginal and average rates.

We might note that marketplace economics conflict much less with conservative political values when the emphasis is placed on the-carrot-and-the-stick (especially the latter) than when it is founded primarily on a belief in individual freedom and the realisation that there is a strong affinity between "capitalism" and "the permissive society." The carrot-and-stick man will be quite happy to talk of "the punishment fitting the crime." The permissive free-market economist feels uneasy about talk of responsibility and punishment; he prefers to say that people should pay for the social costs of their actions, and he would design institutions and laws to that end. Such differences may seem one of language, but language is important. On crucial, unforeseeable occasions the differences between Conservative Gradgrindism and the more libertarian Marketeer will come to the surface.

8. Rule of Law

CONTRARY TO POPULAR BELIEF Friedrich Hayek has not provided any easily recognisable economic criteria for recognising state intervention of the harmful type. Some commentators suppose that he thinks the slightest move from *laissez-faire* will take us irrevocably along the road to serfdom, while others find that he is, if anything, too pragmatic.

The free market arguments in *The Road to Serfdom* were based on the incompatibility of central planning with personal liberty. But in subsequent years Hayek has approached the issue indirectly. He has argued, especially in *The Constitution of Liberty* (probably his magnum opus), that the main condition for a free society is what he calls "the rule of law." He certainly does not mean by that that the mere observance by rulers of constitutionally enacted laws is enough. On the contrary he would condemn many perfectly valid legislative acts for being arbitrary, discriminatory, and giving far too much discretion to politicians and officials. It is less misleading if we translate "the rule of law" to mean a presumption in favour of general rules and against discretionary power. Hayek attempts to derive not only the fundamental political and legal basis, but also the economic policies, of a free society from this conception.

"The rule of law" may not, however, rule out everything that Hayek would like it to rule out. Many of the economic doctrines flow better simply from assertions that, if one believes in free personal choice, the direction of economic activity must be decided by the consumer, saver, investor, and worker. This is a straightforward economic deduction, made in *The Road to Serfdom* but accepted—with qualifications about imperfections and externalities—by many mainstream economists.

Nevertheless, Hayek has performed a very great service by bringing back on to the agendas of discussion the idea of the rule of impartial general laws, as something different from the mere constitutional enactment of the policies of elected leaders. This is a theme which has recently become fashionable—but, alas, only in Conservative circles, and then only when the party is in opposition—under the theme of "elective dictatorship."[10]

Unfortunately neither Hayek nor anyone else has been able to give a statement of the doctrine of the rule of general laws which will make clear what it implies in particular cases. To say that "laws must not single out named individuals" would not be controversial even among collectivists, and would not be enough to protect us against a great deal of arbitrary legislation. On the other hand general rules must mention categories: traffic laws deal with motor-cars, sales taxes make traders liable and so on. Once this is admitted, it is very difficult to see how rules can be prevented from singling out occupations or industries. Nor is it necessarily always desirable that they should be prevented from so doing. But once we have gone along this road a supposedly general law may well pick out for especially severe treatment a group or even a single individual.

A further restriction is required, but is extremely difficult to formulate. Hayek's proposal—that a general rule should be acceptable to a majority of both those whom it benefits and those whom it harms—is much too strong. For it gives a veto to any minority in any circumstances—for instance, to the Mafia in a proposal for a new law against banditry. And Hayek's illustration of progressive taxation as contrary to the rule of law, because it is

[10] Lord Hailsham, *The Dilemma of Democracy* (1978).

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not acceptable to high-rate payers, hardly helps his case. There are many arguments against high marginal tax rates; but the objections of those who pay them are hardly conclusive.

A MORE PROMISING APPROACH is "the veil of ignorance," proposed by John Rawls.[11] This is that a rule should be acceptable to someone who has not the slightest idea how he or she, personally, is likely to be affected. Rawls would actually like his reader to suppose that he or she is ignorant of his own personal position in society (and indeed, in some statements, even of the society or century to which he belongs). The use of the veil of ignorance requires a large imaginative effort, even in its less rigorous conception. Moreover, the vast literature generated by John Rawls' work suggests that it is not enough to provide determinate substantive conclusions on which all who accept the basic idea would agree. Personal attitudes towards risk (e.g. the risk of being one of the unlucky ones) and the value attached to the small chance of a large prize will affect a person's attitude to the distribution of property rights, taxes, and transfers.

If it came to laws against fast driving, an individual would either express his own personal trade-off between safety and speed, or in true Rawlsian style try to imagine what he would think if he were ignorant of his own personal temperament. But to deprive someone of one attribute after another in quest of "the veil of ignorance" is to come near to asking him to imagine himself divested of all attributes, in which case he would hardly be a person able to engage in discourse on just rules.

The quest for a foolproof definition of just general rules is most unlikely to succeed. This is not an argument for throwing out the notion. The basic concepts of mathematics, formal logic, and even physics are far from easy to define, but this does not make them useless. ("What is electricity?" said the examiner to the hopeless pupil. "I don't know" was the reply. "Good", said the examiner, "that makes two of us. You pass with honours.") The Rawls veil of ignorance does supply a criterion of disinterestedness, and helps to narrow down the alternative possibilities.

ONCE THE IDEAL of just general rules has been outlined, however hazily, we know well enough that many of the items of the criminal code are as close to impersonal general rules as we can hope to get, just as the Star Chamber and the Press Gang are at the other extreme. We know too, if we are frank, that a piece of legislation which defines an illegal monopoly or restrictive practice, even if only in *prima facie* terms, is closer to the ideal than one which leaves everything to the discretion of the minister or some official commission.

General rules are desirable for their own sake. The limitations of the law are more akin to the constraints imposed by nature than are the unpredictable discretionary orders and prohibitions of public officials, and as such are more acceptable to anyone with self-respect.

There are also many cases in which general rules are more likely to be successful in achieving the professed objectives of governments than discretionary policies. Freely floating exchange rates, permanently fixed rates of a gold-standard type, rules about the Budget balance (which can be fairly subtle and allow for deficits in specified circumstances laid down in advance) are all examples of general rules. Discretionary monetary and fiscal policies, "dirty floating", and "fixed but adjustable exchange rates" are all examples of the alternative approach. As anyone familiar with these instances will confirm, the general rules cannot be engraved once-and-for-all on tablets of stone but require continuing interpretation, evolution, and improvement.

Hayek is right to emphasise that general rules are an important protection—perhaps the most important single protection for freedom. If those making a law do not know to whom it will apply and cannot adjust it for the benefit even of themselves or their friends, the laws are less likely to be oppressive. Hayek, however, often argues as if general laws are a sufficient condition for a free society; and this is mistaken. Many policies involving a high degree of coercion can be imposed by general rules—not only the Scottish Sabbath conceded by Hayek, but for instance a ban on foreign travel (to which the exceptions such as business and official travel could be stated quite impersonally). There is no one philosopher's stone for minimising coercion in society. We should applaud Hayek's resurrection of the ideal of "a government of laws rather than men" without expecting that it will always be unambiguous or a sufficient guarantee against oppression.

9. *The Myth of Just Reward*

THE MOST RADICAL of Hayek's contributions is the denial that it is possible to assess a just reward for people's services and pay them accordingly. This strikes at the most cherished illusion on the Right as well as on the Left. Not merely does Hayek deny that there are ethical or scientific principles for determining, say, a socially just "incomes policy." He also denies that there is any moral merit attaching to the rewards people can obtain in the market-place. Many conservatives,

[11] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (1972).

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including some who regard themselves as Hayekians, say that the market price for a person's services reflects their marginal value to society and is, therefore, just.

But Hayek is right to insist that, although the first proposition may be true, the inference does not follow. It is expedient that "pay relativities" should reflect market valuations in order to steer resources towards where they are most needed. Moreover, to attempt to override market relativities in the name of "reward according to merit" presupposes that some outside authority can assess how much pain and effort a task has cost (which will, in any case, vary enormously between individuals in the same occupation), and whether people have made as much of their opportunities as they should, and "how much of their achievement is due to circumstances." This is an impossible undertaking, and the attempt to undertake it involves *hubris* of a frightening extent.

Nor is the aim sensible. As Hayek writes, it is more rational for people "to achieve a minimum of pain and sacrifice and therefore a minimum of merit." Perhaps the single most attractive feature of a reasonably free Market Economy is that a person's livelihood does not depend on persuading a public official, or a trade union, or a workers' cooperative of his merit. It is sufficient that he should be able to perform some service for which his fellow-men express a demand, irrespective of whether they like him or not. It is, incidentally, worth observing that "reward according to merit" is quite incompatible with egalitarianism, and is indeed a completely contrary idea.

BUT ALL THIS IS A FAR CRY from saying that the rich, the poor, and the in-between deserve their respective places in society, or would do so if hereditary wealth were eliminated and opportunities more evenly distributed. It is expedient to relate relative pay to market demand and supply; to attempt to substitute a different scale of relative importance would produce horrendous results for more reasons than can be given here. Nevertheless, actual rewards will depend on an unpredictable mixture of effort, ability, and luck. The ability to sing the *Liebestod*, having a nose for commercial opportunities, sporting an attractive appearance or personality are matters of luck not merit. Nor is it a demerit to have trained for an occupation for which the supply has increased (academic teaching) or the demand fallen off (such as steel workers).

This aspect of Hayek's teaching is the most difficult for many of his conservative supporters to accept. Irving Kristol, for instance, complains in a well-known critique [12] that there are deep-seated yearnings for a moral or theological justification of differences in well-being or position; and that the rational arguments for accepting a system which does not even claim to bring a just distribution of rewards are too abstract to accept. This may be true psychologically. But Hayek is still abundantly justified in warning that a defence of the market system on the grounds that it offers just rewards is bound to fail.

A true Hayekian has no more sympathy than any member of the left-wing *Tribune* Group with the white-collar worker who dislikes being overtaken by blue-collar workers, or with professional men who complain that truck-drivers are now earning more than they are. (A reader of Adam Smith's teachings on "equality of net advantages" among people of comparable abilities and opportunities would expect something like this to happen sooner or later.)

Hayek's denial of the doctrine of just reward is especially attractive because it undermines so much "conventional wisdom." It is the complete opposite of what most Conservative and Republican politicians and most middle-class voters wish to believe. These all feel much better if they can suppose that their relative affluence of former years and any advantages they still retain have been and are rewards for conspicuous merit.

BUT, CHARACTERISTICALLY, HAYEK SPOILS a splendid and heretical contribution to understanding by extending the denial of just occupational reward to the much more sweeping assertion that there is no such thing as "social justice." The value, or otherwise, of distinguishing a special kind of justice from justice in general is not the issue. And it is a semantic problem whether people's ethical views on the distribution of wealth and income should come under "justice" or under some other heading. The substantive point is that Hayek (in striking contrast to John Rawls) insists that *any* public policy towards the distribution of income and property (beyond the provision of a basic social-security minimum) is incompatible with a free society and the rule of law. (I have already mentioned his objection to progressive taxation.) In this he performs a disservice to market economists, who have tried for generations to convey to uncomprehending politicians that it is quite possible to change the distribution of wealth without interfering with market relativities. A combined progressive and negative income tax reduces absolute rewards at the top and increases them at the bottom, *without* attempting job or merit evaluation and without interfering with market rankings.

An ideal shape of an income or property distribution can be expressed in perfectly general mathematical terms without any mention of merit,

[12] Irving Kristol and Daniel Bell, eds., *Capitalism Today* (1971).

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occupation, or individuals. Its instruments can be taxes, positive and negative, or the law of property. (For instance, a Capital Transfer Tax could be levied progressively on the beneficiaries rather than on the donors). There could, in addition, be a continuing distribution of rights to dividend income which would dilute the share of existing owners, and even bring in new cohorts as a young generation comes of age. We might begin with a North Sea equity.[13]

To be sure, no conclusion is likely to the debate on the optimal pattern of property rights and tax progression. But this does not mean that nothing sensible can be said. Even the most loyal Hayekian might hesitate to recommend inaction (beyond, say, a small social-security topping-up) if 0.01 per cent of citizens had 99.99 per cent of a country's income and wealth. The fact that they do not do so (and most headline estimates of property concentration are wild exaggerations) is a fortunate fact of economic life. But the logic of Hayek's position is that, if the facts were otherwise, some profound principle of human freedom would or should prevent legislation from interfering. The difference between reward according to merit (or spurious job evaluation) and generalised action to affect distributional patterns is a subtle one for the non-economist to grasp. It is a pity that Hayek's deeply-felt dislike of both has helped to obscure the distinction.

10. The Interest-Group Threat

HAYEK'S MOST RECENT warnings are no longer about the overambitious centralised planning of *The Road to Serfdom* (closely paralleled, incidentally, by George Orwell's *1984*), but about the threat posed by the domination of rival interest-groups. This is leading, not to a single centralised tyranny, but to shifting pockets of anarchy and petty dictatorship, occurring simultaneously in different areas. The relative stability of expectations about the political and economic framework—which allows individuals to make long-term plans with some stability of expectations about the social rules—is under threat.[14]

The main theme of the third and final volume of *Law, Legislation and Liberty* is that democracy has degenerated into an unprincipled auction to satisfy rival organised groups who can never in the long run be appeased, because their demands are mutually incompatible. His main contribution to the discussion of contemporary "stagflation", i.e. the combination of high inflation and high unemployment, is through his analysis of interest-group politics. This is not to under rate his reopening of key issues in monetary theory glossed over by most monetarists,[15] but to agree with him that the obstacles to appropriate monetary policies for containing inflation and to labour market policies for containing unemployment lie in the political sphere.

Hayek goes along with the American-inspired economic theory of politics, which analyses the political market in terms of competitive bidding for the Citizen's Vote, just as commercial businesses compete for the Citizen's Pound or Dollar. But, unlike these theorists, he regards unprincipled vote competition and competitive lobbying as not merely defective—in the way that commercial markets can be only more so—but inherently objectionable because they have nothing to do with justice. He sees them as simply the sharing-out of spoils which people take from their fellow-citizens. The non-specialist who remembers that Volume 2 was devoted to undermining the idea of "social justice" may feel confused by the enormous emphasis on some other sort of justice in Volume 3; and I believe that this dichotomy is unhelpful and unnecessary.

But the matter is too important to be dismissed because of infelicities of presentation. It is surely an achievement for a writer, in his 80th year when the volume was published, to have been able to shift so far from his earlier diagnosis and point to the real threats of the closing decades of the 20th century.

FOR ANYONE WITH EYES TO SEE, the unprincipled vote competition of modern elections is both immoral and ultimately a threat to democracy itself. A universal experience of journalists who have done any doorstep work at elections is hearing the cynical "What will they do for me? . . . I know them . . . . All promises and talk." It is not the cynicism that is worrying, but the assumption behind it—that good, honest, uncorrupt government is concerned with *giving* things to people. It is not. It is concerned with laying down laws or decid-

[13] See: Samuel Brittan and Barry Riley: "A People's Stake in North Sea Oil", *Lloyds Bank Review* (April 1978).

[14] This pretty well disposes of the charge made by the Old Right essayists, such as Maurice Cowling and Peregrine Worsthorne in *Conservative Essays*. Edited by MAURICE COWLING. Cassell, £5.95. They declare that the Hayekian emphasis on freedom is misplaced: there is already too much freedom, and not enough authority. As Shirley Letwin shows (in by far the best essay in that collection), a threat to order is also a threat to liberty (and *vice versa*) in a limited state. "Freedom in this sense is not opposed to order but to the kind of order we associate with war."

But Mr Cowling is descriptively accurate when he writes, "It is not freedom that Conservatives want; what they want is the sort of freedom that will maintain existing inequalities or restore lost ones." A market approach to earnings cannot guarantee such maintenance or restoration.

[15] *The Denationalisation of Money*, Institute of Economic Affairs (2nd ed., 1979).

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ing which services should be financed collectively from taxation rather than individually through the market. Both methods and provisions have to be paid for by the citizens themselves. Governments have nothing to give.

Many political theorists, including the American pluralists, have long taken it for granted that politics is and can only be about the accommodation of rival interest-groups, and that if a fair compromise is reached between them we have nothing to worry about. It has been natural for people brought up on this false common sense to claim that what we need is to extend the process further into economic policy. They advocate institutions such as "a national pay forum" and expansion of the NEDC, in which employers meet trade unionists and government representatives, to a point where there can be real horse-trading.

It must be admitted that the harm done by interest-group accommodation has not been spelt out very fully by economists, whether in technical writings or in public explanations. It is, rather, a working assumption shared by most economists and a few "common interest" political theorists, but hardly anyone else. Hayek, for instance, refers readers to Mancur Olson's *Logic of Collective Action* [16] for an explanation. But it is mostly concerned with how interest-groups come into being and are cemented together. The explanation of the damage done is concentrated in a long footnote.

Here too, I can give only a rough sketch of why horse-trading between groups is unlikely to produce a satisfactory economic result. Each party to the bargain is likely to be given some concession which is only mildly damaging to the rest of the community. One group may be granted a tariff on foreign imports; another a protection from the threat of new domestic entrants; a third a delay in the introduction of new methods or deliberate overmanning (called "work sharing") to keep up employment. One group may receive an injection of public money to finance a wage increase unavailable in the market; another large section will receive rent controls and subsidies, thus leading to permanent housing shortage; and another large group "mortgage concessions" leading to overinvestment in dwellings. But the harm done by the sum total of these restrictive practices and special deals is very far from mild. Each of us suffers from the concession to the groups to which we do not belong. We would all be better off in the not-so-long term if we could achieve the only horse-trading worth doing, i.e. an agreement by every group to relinquish its special privileges on the understanding that other groups did the same.

IT SHOULD BE STRESSED that the appointment of spokesmen for wide-ranging groups such as Consumers or Home-owners makes matters worse rather than better. Such spokesmen are all too inclined to press for policies such as "price controls" or "mortgage-rate subsidies" which are in the end detrimental to the welfare of the community and thus to the people they claim to represent. The best way to promote the consumer interest is to encourage competition to serve it in the marketplace, aided perhaps by generalised policies of a non-interest-group kind (such as subsidising consumer information services . . . or making sure that people are legally liable for adverse spillovers, such as dumping noxious substances in rivers).

Of course politics have always had a large element of "pork barrel" and "feeding trough" about them. This was especially true in the USA where "pluralist" (i.e. interest-group) political theory and free-market economics developed, side by side, in splendid isolation. The "pork barrel" in fact does little harm when government activities and aspirations and popular expectations of their results are modest. The defects of politics viewed as an accommodation of interest-groups are thus not probed until it is too late.

The damage done by interest-groups to economic efficiency or growth is, however, the least of the harm. Far more important is that by insisting on real rewards above market-clearing levels for their members they price out of jobs people who may be forced to choose between inferior work (which does not pay them much above the dole) and the dole itself. As Hayek puts it:

> "The chief power of the trades unions rests today entirely on their being allowed to use power to prevent other workers from doing work they would wish to do."

But the phenomenon is broader than the coercive power of trade union monopolies in the labour market. Similar "pricing out" results may be achieved by minimum-wage legislation or "employment protection" laws which destroy employment by raising real labour-costs; and by many other measures. Nor is this the end of the affair. For governments have tended to respond to the unemployment created by interest-groups by attempting to spend their way out of it, thus generating rapid and runaway inflation, which can neither be allowed to continue nor be checked without an unpleasant transitional recession. Other responses are attempts at employment creation by protection against imports, which can only transfer the shocks to other people's economies. With most

[16] Mancur Olson, Jr, *Logic of Collective Action* (1965). Olson has subsequently attributed the slow growth of the British economy to the domination of interest-groups in long-established industrial democracies. The analysis is fairly convincing, but the mechanics of the impact of interest-groups on the growth are not elaborated (*The Political Economy of Comparative Growth Rates*, 1979).

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countries behaving in this way, the result is likely to be still more unemployment, thus aggravating the original problem.

BUT WORSE EVEN THAN the unemployment problem is the problem of stability. There is no "invisible hand" which harmonises, however imperfectly, the rivalry of groups on distribution from individual self-interest. The relative position of different interest-groups in both the political and commercial markets is not rooted in anything firm, and it is easily upset if a raid is organised to improve the relative position of one group. If such raids are frequent, the pattern of market-clearing wages is likely to change disconcertingly as groups jostle for position.

This both raises the minimum unemployment level—thus encouraging governments to protect and inflate—and is a direct cause of social tension and disaffection from democratic régimes.[17]

Hayek sees the source of interest-group domination in what he calls majoritarian or unlimited democracy. This is known more popularly as "the Mandate doctrine"—the belief that a government elected by a majority of voters (usually a plurality) should be able to enact what it likes without any check. These excessive pretensions can only destroy the real value of democracy as the best way we know of changing the government without force and making rulers accountable to their citizens.

"Majoritarian democracy" is not the only source of interest-group pressure. Such pressure is experienced in Communist Europe, although the interest-groups may be different. But the great expansion of the political sphere (and the crumbling of restraints and inhibitions on what governments may attempt) has increased both the pressures by organised interests on governments and the responsiveness of political leaders to these pressures. There is also the uncomfortable thought that the liberal as well as the majoritarian aspects of democracy may make it unable to deal with interest-group privileges. Most Western politicians and their advisers suppose that thoroughgoing measures to undermine labour-market monopolies would lead to violent resistance which could only be overcome, if at all, by an extreme use of state violence. In the words of Henry Simons, writing over 30 years ago,

> "Democracy cannot live with tight occupational monopolies; and it cannot destroy them, once they gain great power, without destroying itself in the process."[18]

WE FACE A REAL, not a bogus dilemma. There is a crucial connection between personal and political freedom, on the one hand, and economic freedom on the other, as *The Road to Serfdom* clearly established. In the three-and-a-half decades since it appeared there has not been a single example of a fully collectivist economy retaining basic freedoms. Yet the only societies which seem able to protect a market economy from erosion by interest-groups are certain Pacific Basin countries in which either political freedom or democracy, or both, are absent.

If, as I believe, this authoritarian cure is worse than the disease, what reforms are possible in liberal democracy itself?[19] The dilemma is that we need authority to prevent people tearing each other to pieces and to safeguard at least some personal liberty. But how can we prevent this authority from becoming a source of oppression itself?

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[17] The theme of Bernard Nossiter's *Britain: A Future that Works* (1978) is that obsessive criticism of the poor performance of British traditional manufacturing industry is misplaced; and so too is the concern with statistics and comparisons of national growth-rates. Surprised though he might be to hear it, this message fits in with the reminder given by philosophical conservatives such as Hayek and Oakeshott that the state is not an enterprise but an association of people living under rules. The insistence of Establishment opinion that the Thatcher Government must be judged on how far it achieves a shaking-up in established attitudes, administering "shock therapy" to managements and unions, showed how far-gone conventional opinion was in the collectivist belief that the UK was a business enterprise run by a board of directors charged with improving performance. This is a shocking heresy to true conservatives and libertarian socialists alike.

William Waldegrave's *The Binding of Leviathan* (1978) fails to make a notable contribution to conservative thinking because of the frequent intrusion of bogus, supposedly technology-based imperatives, in which he swallows much fashionable nonsense on work-sharing, import controls, and so on. Nossiter's is the more truly conservative book.

But in his desire to exonerate the trade unions, Nossiter glosses over the obstacles that interest-group privileges have become to the relaxed society of free men and women which he favours. He rightly says that Britain "should stop worrying about declining industry and actually hasten its demise", concentrating on services and skills which British people enjoy providing and where they have a comparative advantage. But the union interest has made preservation of old jobs a national cult and a Labour Party religion. Nossiter rightly criticises James Callaghan for failing to realise that industrial bail-outs can only be "techniques to ease a transition and not props designed to preserve industry forever." This rather large lapse marred Callaghan's otherwise dignified 1979 election campaign. Nossiter concludes by extolling British "incomes policies" as pioneering examples for the rest of the world in reducing inflation and preparing the ground for conventional Keynesian techniques to expand the economy. The commendation turned out sadly premature, to say the least.

[18] Henry Simons, *Economic Policy for a Free Society* (1948).

[19] *The Coming Confrontation* (ed. Ralph Harris and Arthur Seldon, Institute of Economic Affairs, 1978) is an attempt to answer *inter alia* the following questions.

> "For how long can an open society be closed by cumulative restrictions before it becomes difficult to re-

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11. The Separation of Powers

HAYEK DOES NOT ANALYSE the question of how legislatures could tackle entrenched interest-group powers without undermining liberal principles in the methods used. It may be that the problem was exaggerated both by Simons in the early 1940s and by those who spoke about the "ungovernability" of Britain in the 1970s. One does not have to apologise for agnosticism on this issue.

The proposals of Hayek are related to the other problem: the protection of the legislative body from interest-group pressure. He proposes two entirely different parliamentary bodies, elected in entirely different ways: one concerned with "the general rules of just conduct" or the Legislature in the true sense; and the other a Governmental Assembly concerned with supervising the managerial decisions of the elected rulers, who would be acting within the framework of basic law developed by the legislative assembly.

This is not as strange as it sounds. The distinction has roots in both political theory and practice; and it is very similar to the distinction which Michael Oakeshott makes between *politics* (which is discussion about the framework of law in which individuals should pursue their aims) and *ruling* (the activity of people who occupy certain offices). It is even more to be distinguished from the management of an enterprise association, such as a company or a church or club, which has agreed common purposes. What Oakeshott calls "civil association" has no purposes. It provides the rules under which individuals seek to fulfil their own aims.[20]

Oakeshott is too fastidious to recommend anything. He is ostensibly just discussing what "civil association" really is, although his own convictions do slip out when he remarks that

> "caring for the condition of a civil association ... calls for so exact a focus of attention and so uncommon a self-restraint that one is not astonished to find this mode of human relationship to be as rare as it is excellent."

Hayek, unlike Oakeshott, tries to find some mechanical means for restoring the conditions of civil association, although he has no illusions that his ideas stand a chance until there has been a great change in the climate of opinion. His Governmental Assembly would be elected much as at present and would provide a majority for the government of the day. The other, Legislative, Assembly, in which his real interest clearly lies, would be elected in yearly cohorts and consist of people aged 45 to 60, sitting for fifteen years. Each elector would vote only once in his life for his legislative representative; and there are other ingenious proposals to protect electors and elected from interest-group pressures.

IT IS ALL TOO EASY to raise an eyebrow at the bizarre mechanics and at the way in which an upholder of the slow organic evolution of rules and practices has emerged as a wildly Benthamite constitutional engineer. But such sneers are as pointless as they are wrong. There are many other ways in which the Legislature might be chosen so that it contained, for instance, both younger and older people. The essential point is that there should be an element of *continuity*, and of protection from cruder interest-group appeals, in the selection of legislators who would put some limits on the activities of government and the Governmental Assembly. Moreover, the recognition of the need for deliberation and conscious choice in the rules we follow is an improvement on Hayek's position in his more theoretical works, where he puts excessive stress on tradition and evolution.

The real grounds for misgiving are different. Hayek's legislators bear some resemblance to the members of the US Supreme Court, with the difference that they would be openly making law instead of doing so by stealth. The Supreme Court is in many ways a third assembly, additional to Congress and the Senate. The combination of Presidential selection and long periods of office provides just that combination of stability and responsiveness to prevailing open government for which Hayek is aiming. But Hayek could not claim that the Supreme Court has protected the USA from interest-group pressures.

More than that, it is far from certain that a legislative assembly whose members had a long tenure would in fact enact only the very general non-discretionary rules Hayek favours. They may be a little less nakedly open to highly specific

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open? If the restrictions create expectations of permanence of employment, incomes and other property rights, will proposals for reform by analysis, debate and persuasion encounter tension and discord with a risk to the survival of liberal society?"

These are excellent questions, given real point by the crisis in the Labour Party, whose "moderate" leaders risk making it even more an instrument for the trade-union barons in return for the latter's protection against the unpopular collectivism of the annual Party Conference.

Unfortunately, the division of *The Coming Confrontation* among twelve different authors, with no coherent division of subject matter, prevented the volume from fulfilling its original promise despite individual insights; and the tone of the book did not justify the sensationalist title. The IEA has done more to put "market economics" on the map than any other organisation, and mainstream economists have been forced to take its publications seriously to keep abreast of professional debate.

But it is not always right in its judgment of the relative importance of its different pieces of writing. It should place more trust in the luck of the market, with all its imperfections, and be less inclined to look for "conspiracy" explanations for the relative amount of press attention paid to its different publications.

[20] Michael Oakeshott, *On Human Conduct* (1975).

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interest-group pressures; but it is all too easy to see them establishing tribunals for the Regulation of Wages and Prices "on the merits of the case" and allocating subsidies or establishing tariffs in a similar spirit. Not only is it extremely unlikely that they would accept Hayek's argument against progressive income tax; it is far from certain that they would even prevent arbitrary distortions of that progression through inflation. They might conceivably establish an independent central bank, with a clear-cut responsibility to limit the money supply to a non-inflationary amount. But this is hardly to be relied upon, as attitudes here are likely to vary with prevailing trends and fashions.

The biggest weakness of Hayek's proposals for a Legislative Assembly is not the method of selection but the lack of even a vague picture of how it would operate in practice in relation to the Governmental Assembly. He is explicit that the Budget must be considered by the latter body. But the majority party in that assembly would not have unlimited freedom to make any budgetary provisions it liked, or the whole point of the arrangement would go. Would it set rates within a tax structure designed by the legislators? Where would the boundary be? Would there be any limits to tax progression, or for that matter any guarantees for social security beneficiaries? Here we are merely told that the principles of public finance would have to be rethought.

It is certainly worth trying to elaborate and improve the Hayekian idea for two assemblies—which might in Britain seem less "way out" if tied in with proposals to reform the House of Lords and for setting up a Constitutional Court. Whether in the end it will prove possible to separate law-making from government policy sufficiently to protect democracy from interest-groups, or whether some other route will turn out more feasible, I do not pretend to know. Hayek may be a shade too scathing about the case for lesser reforms (e.g. proportional representation); but it would be idle to pretend that they do more than scratch the surface.

WHAT DOES SEEM INCONTROVERTIBLE is that political auctioneering, interest-group pressure, and the combination of excessive expectations from collective action with excessive contempt for governmental and legal institutions are a threat not merely to some pure imaginary *laissez-faire* dream, but also to a functioning "mixed" or "corrected" market economy—and for that reason a threat to individual freedom and popular government. If we are ever to reconstruct our politics, some of the key Hayekian doctrines—such as preference for rules over discretionary authority; the non-divine right of a temporary majority; the connection between markets and freedom; the realisation that rewards in this world neither can nor should reflect merit; and that a healthy political system is not a horse-trough at which interest-groups drink—will have to come into their own.

Conservatives may pay lip-service to some of these ideas; and even follow a few of them partially and erratically. But it is progressives and radicals, now looking for new directions, who have most to learn from them—if only they could shed a few prejudices and illusions.

Outside Inside

Pigeons perch on the Holy Family
Carved over the west door, on Joseph's head

On Mary's hand, making them smirk like humans
Who are kind to animals. Inside

The church now, we look out: the birds
Fly through the brown and scarlet saints, and crawl

Like sleepy wasps against their sandalled feet,
Lords of the window, devils looking in.

Then from the street a backfire sends them packing
Only the stolid and the deaf stay on.

The saints are left to bow. The pigeons' wings
Clap round the square like faraway applause.

Patricia Beer

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Peter Porter

The Unlucky Christ

Wherever they put down roots
He will be there, the Master-Haunter
who is our sample and our
would-be deliverer. Argue this—
there were men before Him,
as there were dreams before events,
as there is (or perhaps is not)
conservation of energy. So He
is out of Time but once stopped here
in Time. What I am thinking
may be blasphemy, that I
am like Him, one who cannot
let go of unhappiness, who has
come closer to Him through suffering
and loathes the idea. The ego now,
that must be like a ministry,
the sense of being chosen among men
to be acquainted with grief!
Why not celebrate instead
the wayside cactus which enriches
its air with a small pink flower,
a lovely gift to formalists?
Some people can take straight off
from everyday selfishness to
the mystical, but the vague shape
of the Professional Sorrower
seems to interpose when I try
such transport. The stone had to roll
and the cerements sit up
because He would have poisoned
the world. It has been almost possible
to get through this poem without writing
the word death. The smallest
of our horrors. When they saw Him
again upon the road, at least they knew
that the task of misery would be
explained, the evangelical duty
properly underlined. Tell them
about bad luck, He said,
how people who get close to you
want to walk out on you,
tell them they may meet one person
even more shrouded than themselves.
Jesus's message at Pentecost
sounded as our news always does,
that there is eloquence and decency,
but as for happiness,
it is involuntary, like hell.

Edward Lowbury

Theme and Reflection

The theme: sharp-focused leaves; a village hall;
A distance of green hills; a gusty day;
And in the foreground this gigantic scrawl
Which bellows "PUNKS AND ROCKERS RULE OK";
In front of the whole scene a shallow pool
On which three mallard dawdle and keep cool.

The reflection: a ribbed and shimmering conflagration
Of green fire; a moving surrealist picture
Of a suspended building; also in motion
This writing-on-the-wall, a threat straight out of scripture
That looks like "MENE MENE TEKEL UPHARSIN";
Visionary light; three duck-winged seraphim.

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Art Between Truth & Fiction

Thoughts on William Styron's Novel—By ARNOLD WESKER

I HAVE STUDIOUSLY avoided making pilgrimages to the various Camps which have been made into "museums" to help remember. In Poland there was some shock when I refused to go to Auschwitz. Pain by proxy, there is deceit in such distress. Only once was I caught out. I was directing my play *The Old Ones* at the *Kammerspiel* in Munich at the time of *"Fasching"*, a period of parties, street festivities and fancy dress, and I was told by my designer, the late Rudolph Heinrich, that I was to be taken to a party for theatre people. In the car, fancy-dressed up by him as something ridiculous no doubt, I asked at the height of our gaiety: Where *was* this party? "In Dachau" came the reply. The shock was physical and I had to fight hard to control my emotions. The village had kept its name.

Anger should be divided into two categories: coming from actual experience—then it may be called rage; coming from the experience of retelling—then it may be called outrage. One should try to distinguish between the two in order to know what one has the right to feel.

Can a work of art be created from experience as cruel as the holocaust? It is not simply an indescribable event, the argument goes, but to employ the careful and calculating skills of art requires a degree of callousness which offends the reality and risks lending the disgusting acts an awful beauty. The horror is untransmutable into art, the anger untransmittible.

The extermination camps are not a setting I would presume to handle, and I must confess to even strong, sceptical reactions against a production I recently saw at The National Theatre of *Tamburlaine* who seems to me a tyrant prettified by art; the disturbing thought struck me that in time to come a playwright might well tart up the little house-painter in the equivalent of Marlowe's theatrical bombast.

WILLIAM STYRON, HOWEVER, has hazarded a novel, *Sophie's Choice*[1], which attempts to defy the notion (George Steiner) that "in the presence of certain realities art is trivial or impertinent." It is an extraordinary work, destined, I would dare forecast, to become a major landmark in this debate around the morbid genre which has become known as Holocaust Literature. Not that *Sophie's Choice* is morbid; even though the novel's atmosphere hangs over me and I feel it will haunt for a long time, yet it is often hilarious! But so moved, disturbed and grateful was I for it that in self-protection against duplicity I want to sort out and dwell upon not the book's virtues but its equivocalities, for some of its aspects are questionable. Problems arise. The holocaust is such an emotional quagmire, I want my feelings to earn their trust!

The story line is simple as all good story lines. A young Southern writer settles in a room in a boarding house in Brooklyn, meets there a loving couple and retells their tale. It is written in the first person. As a student the young author had studied the history of the South and in particular has become fascinated by a Negro character named Nat Turner. (William Styron has written a book called *The Confessions of Nat Turner*.) Having flunked his job as an editor for McGraw-Hill he inherits a small sum of money to enable him to take a room in that Brooklyn boarding house where he meets Nathan and Sophie. Nathan is a brilliant Jewish biologist who shifts from rages of withering contempt to marvellous love for Sophie who is a gentile Polish survivor of Auschwitz. She adores him and, terrified of losing him, tells him only half her story. The other half she tells to Styron's author.

A little before half way through his book, written in the first person by a writer-narrator who resembles Styron in many respects, the narrator observes: "Of the many commentators on the Nazi concentration camps few have written with greater insight and passion than the critic George Steiner." But he parts company with Steiner over the view that art dignifies evil by describing, recording it.

> "I cannot accept Steiner's suggestion that 'silence' is the answer, that it is best 'not to add the trivia of literary, sociological debate to the unspeakable.' Nor do I agree with the idea that

[1] *Sophie's Choice*. BY WILLIAM STYRON. Cape, £5.95, Random House, $12.95.

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'in the presence of certain realities art is trivial or impertinent.' I find a touch of piety in this, especially inasmuch as Steiner has not remained silent. And surely, almost cosmic in its incomprehensibility as it may appear, the embodiment of evil which Auschwitz has become remains impenetrable only so long as we shrink from trying to penetrate it, however inadequately; and Steiner himself adds immediately that the *next* best is 'to try and understand.' I have thought that it might be possible to make a stab at understanding Auschwitz by trying to understand Sophie. . . ."

A friend who survived the camps and who shares the view that art cannot, should not touch those incomprehensibly criminal times says that it is not simply a sacrilegious but an impossible task, since the survivors are so crippled with guilt for surviving that what they remember will inevitably be a distortion of the truth. Styron's book, which rests entirely upon the memories and confessions of a survivor, would not survive her criticism.

But there are two kinds of survivors: those who lived through it, and the rest of us who were spared it, and there exists at least one fine literary work by a latter kind of survivor which attests to the possibility that art can touch the untouchable—André Schwarz-Bart's *The Last of the Just*. And now comes another very different attempt by William Styron.

Does it succeed?

The "time relation" element

STYRON WRITES of his "shock of recognition" as he reads Steiner's words:

" 'One of the things I cannot grasp, though I have often written about them, trying to get them into some kind of bearable perspective, is the 'time relation.' Steiner has just quoted descriptions of the brutal deaths of two Jews at the Treblinka extermination camp. 'Precisely at the same hour in which Mehring and Langner were being done to death, the overwhelming plurality of human beings, two miles away on the Polish farms, five thousand miles away in New York, were sleeping or eating or going to a film or making love or worrying about the dentist. This is where my imagination balks. The two orders of simultaneous experience are so different, so irreconcilable to any common norm of human values, their coexistence is so hideous a paradox—Treblinka *is* both because some men have built it and almost all other men let it be—that I puzzle over time. Are there, as science fiction and Gnostic speculation imply, different species of time in the same world, "good time" and enveloping folds of inhuman time, in which men fall into the slow hands of the living damnation?'

"Until I read this passage I had rather simple-mindedly thought that only I had entertained such speculation. . . ."

If I say that Styron *was* being simple-minded it is not to put him down but to suggest that both he and Steiner might be gasping up the wrong tree, aghast at the shadow rather than the substance of the barbarity. Steiner—and the essay is the "Postscript" from *Language and Silence* (1967)—is trying to "discover the relations between those done to death and those alive then, and the relations of both to us; to locate, as exactly as record and imagination are able, the measure of unknowing, indifference, complicity, commission which relates the contemporary or survivor to the slain. So that . . . we may better gauge our own present position, its readiness for or vulnerability to other forms of 'total possibility'."

But it is impossible to do so. The speculation is pointless except that in formulating the question it reaffirms the questioner's humanity and provides not answers (there are none), but cautions. And what have men ever done with cautions? Not that they shouldn't be given, God forbid, and especially by men as brilliant as Steiner, but they should be known for what they are. Speculating upon "time relation" will neither "better gauge our own present position"—what are we doing about Bokassa, the Soviet Labour camps, the Argentinian torturers, the Bolivian tin-miners?—what did we do about Amin? Nor "its readiness for or vulnerability to other forms of 'total possibility' "—what are we doing about the insanities to which we are now vulnerable: nuclear stock-piling, the growing bureaucratic control of lives? All incomparable, I know, but is speculation upon "time relation" only to be reserved for holocausts?

Further, "time relations" frequently preoccupy most thoughtful people: "Here I am in Tokyo, and what these people are doing in the streets, shopping, hurrying to work, holding hands, they have—good God!—been doing regularly while I've been living my life in London!" Or, more personally, I calculated from my diary that at the moment my mother died I was in a hotel room in Stockholm with my wife and a friend, sharing food and wine gaily bought from shops in the street where it was cheaper. While she was dying I was watching the world *première* of my play *The Merchant*.

A million events occur simultaneously. It is not a phenomenon, simply the nature of existence. Irreconcilability is so common that it can be reconciled "to any common norm of human values." Hideous irreconcilability is no more to be reached for as an explanation for human behaviour

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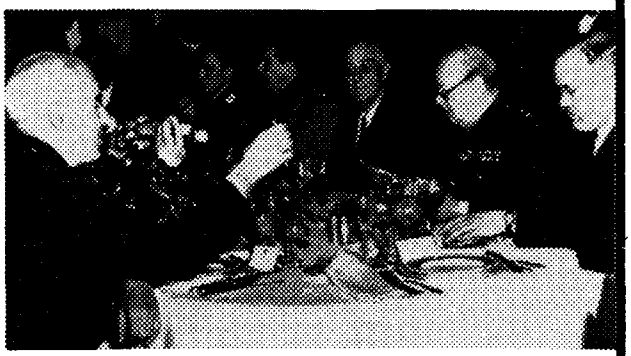

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than the fact: all people breathe. Both may be worth pausing to reflect upon—one keeps sharp our sense of irony, the other keeps us alert to the miracle of life, but neither is of the order of profound or perceptive reflection. The "time relation" factor is irrelevant to man's inhumanity to man. We must look elsewhere for a "bearable perspective."

Not the trivialising of reality by art but the limiting of art by reality

HERE IS MY MAJOR problem with *Sophie*, for it throws me upon my own work as a writer who deals mainly in first-hand experience. The imaginative recreation of reality either illuminates intellect or deepens feeling or sharpens sensibilities, or all three. The question then becomes not: Are there certain realities which art trivialises, or which memory is forced to distort; but—are there certain realities which it is impossible for art to recreate adequately enough to enable us to exercise our emotions, sensibilities and intellect trustworthily?

Sophie's Choice makes us *feel* deeply. How could such a reality fail to achieve that? But precisely because the reality is *that* horrendous reality one can reasonably ask: Is feeling enough? Does not this reality call for more in its recreation? Does it not call for intellectual illumination? My uncertainty is not knowing whether something inherent in that particular reality is what inhibits art or whether it's Styron's recreation of it which fails. I find myself asking this question: Where are we dealing with fact and where with fiction? Why, in this novel more than any other, do I want to know? I am perfectly aware of the degree of real experience and encounter which becomes woven into fiction and achieves that harmony between art and reality which we call literature. But the need to understand *this* unbearable chronicle in *our* century is a burning need. What confronts us is a systematic extermination justified by a philosophically grotesque system of aesthetics which judged one race to be so inferior to all others that it became a holy duty to drain them irretrievably from the bloodstream of civilisation. That story requires immaculate handling. We need to know clearly what is being placed before us, taken by the hand with great care and sensitivity, and no tricks. That is what the survivors are afraid of, the tricks of art.

WITH HISTORIANS we know where we are. For them there exists no event in the history of civilisations from which they can turn away in contempt or dignified silence. To do so opposes the very nature of their function. But is Styron confusing history with art? Where in this novel does fiction end and history begin?

For example, we could absorb the references to the book's theme by a living professor of comparative literature, George Steiner, but are we to assume that because the first person in this book will write about Nat Turner as Styron did, that therefore Sophie and Nathan are real characters to whom the events in the book *did* happen? This is why I ask.

Sophie confesses her attempt to seduce the commandant of Auschwitz (accurately named Rudolf Höss, the *real* commandant of Auschwitz) and we read the following passage:

> "'You've been flirting shamelessly with me,' she heard him say in an unsteady voice. She opened her eyes. His own eyes were distraught and the way in which they goggled about—seemingly out of control, at least for that brief moment—filled her with terror, especially since they gave her the impression somehow that he was about to raise his fist and strike her. But then with a great visceral heave he seemed to regain possession of himself, his gaze became normal or nearly so, and when next he spoke, his words were uttered with their ordinary soldierly steadiness . . . suddenly, to her astonishment, she realized that although his distress clearly partook of some vague and inchoate rage, it was not rage at her at all but at someone or something else. His clutch on her shoulder was hurting her. He made a nervous, choking sound . . . 'I don't like flirts, you see, it is only a way of trying to insinuate yourself into my favor, to try and seek out a few rewards. I have always detested this quality in women, this crude use of sex—so dishonest, so transparent. You have made it very difficult for me, making me think foolish thoughts, distracting me from my proper duties. This flirtatiousness has been damnably annoying, and yet—and yet it can't be all your fault, you're an extremely attractive woman.
>
> 'A number of years ago when I would go from my farm up to Lübeck—I was quite young at the time—I saw a silent film version of Faust in which the woman who played Gretchen was unbelievably beautiful and made a deep impression on me. So fair, such a perfect fair face and lovely figure—I thought about her for days, weeks afterwards. She visited me in my dreams, obsessing me. Her name was Margarete Something, this actress, her last name escapes me now. I always thought of her simply as Margarete. Her voice too: I could only believe that if I could hear her speak, there would be such a purity in her German. Very much like yours. I saw the film a dozen times. I learned later that she died very young—of tuberculosis, I believe—and it saddened me terribly. Time passed and eventually I forget about her—or at

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least she no longer obsessed me. I could never completely forget her.' Höss paused and squeezed her shoulder once more, hard, hurting her, and she thought with shock: Strange, with that pain he is really trying to express some tenderness. . . ."

As one reads such a passage, with its suggestion of kindly thoughtfulness, anguished reflection, personal suffering—the commandant also suffers from migraine—of disarming confession and even a touch of culture, we need to know if this is Styron's imaginative leap into a possible reality, because in a strange, urgent way there is not time for speculation upon character. This same commandant whose recognisably human side is here being evoked, is running a camp in which at that moment people are being subjected to an experience so bestial that, when one can bring oneself to pause and contemplate it, it shatters all that holds sanity together. Something is wrong. Steiner puts it very well. In that same essay from which Styron quotes he is trying to understand what worries him about the fictionalised documentary *Treblinka* by Jean-François Steiner. It is ". . . because that evidence is mastered by the literary talent of the writer, because a narrative persona full of distinct rage and stylistic force interposes between the insane fact and the profoundly exciting economy, hence order, of the book, a certain unreality obtrudes. . . ."

Further, the mixing of fact with fiction in a novel about the holocaust seems to confuse our responses in a way that does not occur when we read historical novels or literature set against an historical background. If the "recognisably human side" is only a fiction (and of course we know that it is) then we want to direct our responses at judging *Styron's* powers of perspective invention, but Styron insists upon presenting everything as if it *were* fact. Our responses are confused. We *imagine* we're in touch with the living moment, and that we can come upon our own thoughts and not be thinking about Styron's, but—they *are* Styron's! What's he doing to us? This awful reality nags at us for purity, not contrivance.

Is this the inherent danger of all literature so deeply rooted in historical events? Steiner sees some virtue in it. Pursuing his worries about *Treblinka*'s style he concedes that it "also has more acceptable, conventional lodging in the imagination . . . for we draw breath at the recognition of a literary device, of a stylistic stroke. . . . The aesthetic makes endurable." My sympathy for such a view is partly what makes Styron's book finally acceptable to me. But Styron might dismiss any such "apologia." I suspect he might say: "I am imaginatively recreating an historical man's character in order to understand his behaviour."

And here he would touch the core of my uncertainty: Does what we are being told about this man help in our understanding of the demonic duties he unhesitatingly takes upon himself? I broaden the question even further: did it *ever* surprise us that evil men could love animals, be moved by music, touched by the innocence of their children? History is so full of man's cruelty that to remind us of its human face explains nothing about the cruelty. Does cruelty even require explanation? After all these centuries? Its place in men's hearts is a fact—the only question to be answered is: in what soil does it flourish? Does Styron's book bring us closer to answering *that* question?

It seems that I'm driving myself into the proposition that all reality *can* lend itself to recreation through art providing the artist is recreating the most significant elements in it. Which of course begs the question: is not one man's significance another man's whimper?

What the novel does not explore

THE PASSAGE I have quoted describes Sophie's attempts to seduce and ingratiate herself with the commandant. She goes to terrible lengths, talking about her virulently anti-Semitic father—a Polish professor of law—producing a pamphlet he'd written, a pre-Nazi solution to the Jewish problem, which she'd kept for just such an emergency in case it might help save her; she proclaims a hatred for the Jews and tells an absurd lie about a sister being raped by one. All her efforts fail, he feels compromised by her clumsy subterfuges and tells her he's sending her back into the main camp, at which she breaks down and begs that her son be released. We realise it was only for him she degraded herself so. Her crime, she pleads, had been merely to steal a ham, it was an accident her being in the camp at all.

"' . . . Please, if you have been impressed only the slightest bit by my presence, by my being, I beg of you to do this for me. Not to release *me*, just to release my little boy. There is a certain way you could do this, which I will tell you about. . . . Please do this for me. Please. *Please!*' "

At this moment in the narrative it is Sophie telling the story rather than the author's author recreating what she'd told him.

"I knew then that I was once more only a worm in his life, a piece of Polish *Dreck*. He grabbed my wrist and pulled my hand away from his shirt and said, 'That's enough!' I'll never forget the *frenzy* in his voice when he said, '*Ich kann es unmöglich tun!*' Which means 'It's out of the question for me to do that.' He said, 'It would be

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> *unlawful* for me to release *any* prisoner without proper authority.' Suddenly I realized I have touched some terrible nerve in him by even mentioning what I have done. He said, 'It's outrageous, your suggestion! What do you take me for, some *Dümmling* you hope to be able to manipulate? Only because I expressed a special feeling for you? You think you could get me to contravene proper authority because I expressed some little affection?' Then he said, 'I find this disgusting!'"

Two sentences, more than any, seem to explain the mentality which can operate such camps: "You think you could get me to contravene proper authority because I expressed some little affection. . . . I find this disgusting!"

Total obedience not merely to authority but *proper* authority. What a concept! Of authority so absolute that love and affection are obscene beside it. A concept revealing an attachment so desperate that the world will surely disintegrate without it. And one realises how profound is the need for people to attach themselves to higher authorities, to surrender everything to them, every last drop of that humanity which makes the human being blessed among animals. But nowhere does Styron's book explore the nature of such needs and the society which nurtures them.

Not the ambiguity but the confusability of metaphor

AS ALL GOOD STORY-TELLERS Styron releases his information gradually, moving from Manhattan, to Brooklyn, to the South, to Auschwitz, to Brooklyn, the South, Auschwitz—backwards and forwards. Sophie lies to begin with but Nathan's rages—"How did *you* survive?"—force her to tell him part of the truth. She lies to the author's author as well, but a tortured conscience forces the other part of the truth out to him.

It seems that the relationship works on many levels: simply as a portrait of a blood-and-passion love affair; less simply as a conflict between Nathan's guilt for being a Jew who missed it all and his burning urge to live; even less simply as a relationship between *two* guilty people expiating their guilts. Or it could be that Nathan's love/hate role in the relationship is based on a need to forgive which struggles with a need for revenge. Certainly his loving is very wonderful and his rages are very savage, even to the extent of beating Sophie—which she takes without question, a small penance for having betrayed the Jews in her heart.

But the story-teller holds back—with too crafty a tantalisation—information which when revealed dilutes the tragic proportions of this tempestuous

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relationship: the brilliant, knowledgeable, witty, exhilarating Nathan is no biologist after all, he's a clubbed genius whose brains the Gods envied, and cursed with fits of madness. His rages, exacerbated by his bouts of drug-taking, are produced *not* by moral conflicts leading to righteous indignation, but by clinical derangement leading to paranoia, insane fits of jealousy, and physical cruelty.

Was *this* why the awful tale was told? To paint a portrait of a poor mad Jewish boy? Was that all? Or is the poor mad Jewish boy a metaphor for all those poor Jewish boys who were driven mad by persecution? Metaphors are tricky devices, they can conjure up many different explanations for themselves which say the same thing, but they must not summon up *conflicting* explanations of themselves.

Nathan's dementia has driven him to carry around a gun. Sophie, despite knowing this, is drawn back to him again and again. She loves him, ineluctably it seems. The madness, the metaphor seems to say, cannot be helped; who can wonder at it, the metaphor seems, with Sophie, to ask, after 2,000 years of the world's cruelty? Forget the madness, the metaphor seems to say, it is his life-enhancing qualities to which she responds: he saved her, brought her back to life, revived her passion, called further gaiety from her tortured soul. But does the metaphor mislead? She returns to him not drawn by helpless love but knowing his madness will end the life she cannot bear to live anyway. He becomes a mere instrument for ending *her* guilt. In which case can *he* have tragic proportions?

The tragedy of a race locked in seemingly endless conflict with the world is played out here through two people locked in mortal conflict with one another. But so preoccupied is Styron with sustaining narrative suspense that he invents twists and turns of plot at the cost of a diminished metaphor: the clinically mad Jew rather than the Jew driven mad. I know that whom the Gods destroy they first make mad, but the Gods are fate in the form of worldly misfortune, not chemistry gone wrong in the genes.

Sex and Suffering

BUT WHAT of Styron's treatment of sex, his hilarious treatment of sex? Laughter and carnal pleasures in the midst of malevolent suffering, how could he move with such speed from the horrors of Birkenau to the pleasures of that creaking bed upstairs? I was not shocked. Had Styron's insensitivity unearthed a flaw in my own? But what should have been the precise nature of my shock? Are descriptions of murdered children less shocking if recognition of the basic sexual drive is delicately left aside for the moment? Would not shock have more revealed a secret disgust for the sexual act, or at best a view of it as a mere frivolous pleasure? Who can possibly cease to make love on being reminded of suffering (there is so much suffering, hourly)? It may be insensitive to force sex into a moment where it is not *mutually* acceptable, but the *mutual* recognition of the commonness of "hideous irreconcilabilities" renders the sexual act not merely inoffensive but infinitely desirable, even necessary. People *need* to comfort one another faced with the "hideous irreconcilabilites" of life.

I do not know William Styron nor have I read his other books—he has written four others. Authors, with a few exceptions, are notoriously different from the impression they give of themselves through their work; but Styron is not in the league of shock-makers. His courage lies in his attempt to reach some "bearable perspective" of that grotesque time of carnage by recording the life force that clings on after, and his achievement is to have coupled respect with juicy enthusiasms for life, sex and art, each inextricably linked with the other. He seems to be saying through his novel: "I pussyfoot with none of these—I fuck with zest, live voraciously, and have been prepared to take twelve years writing my book, nor will I pussyfoot with this outrageous episode that has taken place in my life's time. I need to know and understand just as Sophie needed me to know and understand and so she revealed all. . . ."

There is some innocence in his defiant juxtapositioning of the two, that special kind of urgent innocence which is one of the hallmarks of any work of art deserving the name. He succeeds in uniting despair with defiance, pity with contempt, horror with laughter, and artful narrative with honest intent.

Finally—to more praise

AND WHAT A twelve-year high that was, to have been chosen to catch this tale on the wind. If the characters end up lacking tragic proportions the story does not. So sure is Styron's foot, so beautifully woven is his canvas, and so without piety has he recorded these evil deeds that I for one—even though the dark corners which I needed illuminating have not been explored—am humbled enough to accept his own declaration of honest intent.

From the diary of his youth the author in the book has kept only a handful of pages. Most went into the body of the book; three statements remained for the end:

"*Someday I will understand Auschwitz*. This was a brave statement but innocently absurd. No

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one will ever understand Auschwitz. What I might have set down with more accuracy would have been: *Someday I will write about Sophie's life and death, and thereby help demonstrate how absolute evil is never extinguished from the world.* Auschwitz itself remains inexplicable. The most profound statement yet made about Auschwitz was not a statement at all, but a response:

> The query: "At Auschwitz, tell me where was God?"
> And the answer: "Where was man?"

The second line I have resurrected from the void may be a little too facile, but I have kept it. *Let your love flow out on all living things. . . .*"

There are many ways artists and philosophers have attempted to identify the basic tensions haunting most thoughtful, sensitive people. Styron's polarisation contributes to the list:

> "Absolute evil is never extinguished from the world . . . but let your love flow out on all living things."

My avoidance of the camp museums has been justified: that would have been indulgence. *Sophie's Choice* as art has worked its more honest ways with me. Visiting a camp would have made me feel ashamed, reading this book I am not.

The Fire-Monster

Recent Fiction—By TOM PAULIN

IT'S A COMMONPLACE that the humanist imagination cannot accommodate a vision of evil. For the humanist, evil must always have an external cause—Iago has a psychology which is the result of various conditioning factors that carry all, or some, of the responsibility for his actions. And because man is in various ways conditioned by his environment it follows that he is never spiritually free. Freedom, for the humanist, is the responsibility of the State, a matter of public licence. Humanism therefore finds an extreme and reductive expression in the kind of behaviourist psychologist who argues that mental disorders and delinquency can be cured by treating the human mind like an inefficient television set—bang it hard enough and the picture will return to normal.

William Golding's almost medieval Christian pessimism[1] obliquely dismisses humanist optimism when the delinquent, Sophie, reflects on Mr Goodchild, "that large, old, fat man with his shopful of books and his silly ways." Goodchild's name expresses his Pelagian innocence and his trust in Sophie who, unknown to him, is aware that she has the power "to do anything she liked" with him. As she considers her secret power she happens to glance at a poster advertising a lecture by Bertrand Russell on "Human Freedom and Responsibility." Golding's point is clearly implied by this juxtaposition—Sophie is free to commit good and evil, and Russell's humanism is powerless to explain this.

Sophie's sense of freedom is again expressed in another fantasy in which she imagines obscenely murdering a boy whom she and her two lovers plan to kidnap. Behind her terrifying exercise of freedom Golding has in mind the two Moors Murderers, Brady and Hindley, and their Sadean ethic of total freedom. Golding believes that man possesses a soul and that it is the human soul—not history or social environment—which is ultimately responsible for good and evil action. In *Darkness Visible* his primary image for the freedom of the soul is an explosion, and in the remarkable opening pages of his parable a mysterious child appears to a group of firemen during the London Blitz. The child's face is burnt and disfigured by the flames he walks through. He has no name, no history, and only a mild and virtually autistic personality. In hospital he is named Matthew Septimus Windup, and throughout the story he is known as Matty, while his surname changes to Windgrove, Windrove, Windgraff. This slight figure is the spiritual centre of Golding's vision, and his varying surname refers to Christ's answer to Nicodemus:

> The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. (*John* 3,8)

Matty is the unknowable child of the Spirit who discovers his freedom as he observes a meeting between a curate and a choirboy which resembles an earlier encounter between the pederastic schoolteacher, Pedigree, and one of his pupils. As he watches this drama of "anticipation and enticement" Matty experiences a moment of "pure,

[1] *Darkness Visible*. By WILLIAM GOLDING. Faber & Faber, £4.95.

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whitehot anguish." This burning and explosive emotion is "the first exercise of his untried will"—i.e. his first moment of freedom—and it naturally involves a choice. Matty chooses to recognise that his disfigurement makes him utterly unlovable:

> He knew, and it never occurred to him to doubt the knowledge, or worse, accept it and be proud of it, that he had chosen, not as a donkey between carrots of unequal size, but rather as the awareness that suffered.

Golding's grave theological certainty dismisses a behaviourist notion of choice ("carrots of unequal size") and insists that Matty chooses freely when he recognises that the girl he's in love with will inevitably reject him. He now begins "to weep adult tears, wounded right in the centre of his nature." Through this suffering recognition he discovers his freedom and responsibility, and here Matty resembles James's Catherine Sloper whose spiritual integrity is defined against her father's positive materialism. It's a scene of profound and exemplary seriousness which few, if any, living novelists could equal.

In his journal Matty notes that the question "what am I and what am I to do is still unanswered and I must *endure* like a man holding up a heavy weight." Here the biblical reference is to St Paul's definition of Charity which "Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (1 *Corinthians* 13,7). Matty's enduring spiritual charity exists meekly in an entropic world of moribund traditions symbolised by an ancient choir school, an antiquarian bookshop, and a Victorian ironmonger. The etiolated Englishness and drab sad decencies of the town called "Greenfield" are crossed by chaotic contemporary values—the drug culture of the 1960s and the blank nihilistic terrorism of the 1970s. Golding points both to the spiritual impoverishment of English tradition (symbolised by Mr Pedigree) and to the doctrinaire violence of a youth crying out for "freedom and justice." Through the terrorist, Sophie, he sums up contemporary demands for violent confrontation, ideological commitment and social relevance as, "Just ideas. Ghosts. Ideas and emptiness, the perfect terrorist." Sophie and Pedigree literally pervert freedom, and only Matty truly embodies it as a spiritual reality.

WHEN THE TERRORISTS plot to burn down Greenfield School and kidnap one of the pupils, Matty's freedom is set against their evil exercise of free will. The exploding petrol and blazing school echo the novel's opening description of the London Blitz, and in this apocalyptic chaos

> a strange man dressed as a soldier was able to carry a burden out of the school. It was wrapped in a blanket from the end of which small feet protruded and kicked. This man stumbled on the gravel but ran as fast as he could towards the darkness of the trees. But the flaming tide made him take a curving run and as he did so, a strange thing happened in the fire. It seemed to organize itself into a shape of flame that rushed out of the garage doors and whirled round and round. It made as if on purpose for the man and his burden. It whirled round still and the only noise from it was that of burning. It came so close to the man and it was so monstrous he dropped the bundle and a boy leapt out of it and ran away, ran screaming to where the others were being marshalled. The man dressed as a soldier struck out wildly at the fire-monster, then ran, ran shouting away into the cover of the trees. The fire-monster jigged and whirled. After a time it fell down; and after some more time it lay still.

The fire-monster who saves the child is Matty—the religious allegory is rather crude, though—and at the end of the novel he appears to Pedigree in a golden vision which redeems and frees the derelict pederast. Here Matty answers his earlier question, "*What am I for?*" He is active goodness, the spirit of love and redemption which, Golding suggests, must overthrow evil. And although his novel is sometimes victimised by the cultural chaos it dissects, its uncompromising vision of spiritual love triumphing over evil and stupidity is so powerful and so intensely wise that it must force us to accept a theology and a theodicy. *Darkness Visible* is one of Golding's finest achievements—it is in many ways similar to *Free Fall*—and those who believe that we are simply conditioned by our environment and that the civil power is the sole guarantor of our freedom will find no comfort in this brooding and magnificent parable.

LIKE GOLDING, Patrick White is a deeply religious writer, and the visit to Australia which Matty makes in *Darkness Visible* is an equable tribute to White's vision of "the burnt ones"—those disfigured human beings who, in Blake's phrase, have learnt "to bear the beams of love." Just as Matty is scorched by fire, so many of the characters in White's fiction are seared by a terrible love. Unfortunately White's new novel[2] does not approach his achievement in his earlier masterpieces, *The Tree of Man* and *Voss*, and this is because his view of life has become increasingly grotesque, cruel and misanthropic. His story of a "pseudo-man-cum-crypto-woman" who meta-

[2] *The Twyborn Affair*. By PATRICK WHITE. Cape, £5.95.

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morphoses from Eudoxia Vatatzes to Eddie Twyborn to Eadith Trist is a disgusted "collage of fantasies" which is savagely confused and badly written. The transvestite comedy and the grotesquerie are peculiarly Australian—there is a character called Joan Golson who is clearly based on Barry Humphries' Dame Edna Everage, and White's hermaphroditic protagonist echoes a transvestite character in Joseph Furphy's *Such Is Life*, a brilliant and experimental Australian novel published in 1903. For White, Australia is an "aggressively masculine world" in which Eddie Twyborn feels a "complete misfit", and yet there is a contradictory misogyny which is reflected in Eddie's lipsticked mouth which glistens "like the pale, coral trap of some great tremulous sea anemone." This voracious lymphatic image anticipates the puffy, blowsy, hothouse texture of the brothel scenes in the London section of the novel. Again, White endorses conventional sexual stereotypes when he speaks of "feminine compassion" and "masculine revenge", and so he is unable to offer a coherent redefinition of personality.

Eddie's father, Judge Twyborn, is "dedicated to the Law" and this suggests how the name "Twyborn" carries much of White's sense of the oppressive masculinity and confused identity of Australian society. The name alludes to Tyburn, and therefore obliquely to the early convict settlements, and this sense of transported legality and cruelty is central to the Australian imagination (it informs the first important Australian novel—Marcus Clarke's *For the Term of His Natural Life*). Linked with this is a play on the Tichborne Claimant, the Wagga Wagga butcher who is at least as important a figure in Australian mythology as Ned Kelly. Also, the name carries the hermaphroditic sense of "twin-born" and so seeks to bridge the masculine and feminine as well as the European and the Antipodean. White's loathing of Australian society, so apparent in his earlier novels, now embodies itself in a name which suggests confusion, contradiction and the oblique question "why born?".

White's prose has a scarifying alkaline quality which sears his characters in a pitiless and sterile manner, and by insisting harshly on bad smells, deformity, harelips and fetid perversions, he damns everyone as ugly and irredeemable. Underlying his obsessions is a deep fear of love which reveals itself in this representative passage:

> "Shouldn't we embrace?" The gruff warning in her voice at once established her as his mother; and as they advanced upon each other, still the victims of their diffidence, he saw that it was she

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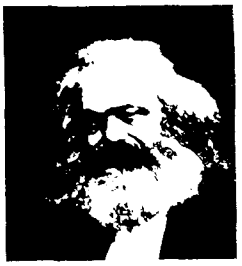

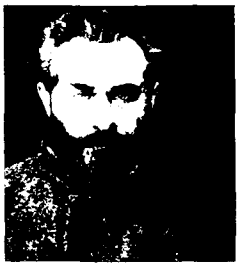

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who was beginning to take the initiative, while he, the passive object of her intentions, was drawn into the labyrinth of wrinkles, cigarette fumes, and more noticeable, a gust of early whisky.

In its Oedipal fear, this is similar to these lines from "Hunting Season":

Down in the startled valley
Two lovers break apart:
He hears the roaring oven
Of a witch's heart;

but where Auden shows the nullity of this attitude, White seeks to justify it. He does so in a style that is often extremely clumsy: "The hornet was worrying the silence worse than ever, a fiery copper wire piercing but never aborting a situation the enormity of which could only be human." Although I believe that Patrick White is one of the very few living novelists who deserve to be called "great", I'm dismayed by the embittered silliness of *The Twyborn Affair*. Somehow White has mislaid his mystic and prophetic gifts, and he seems unable to write with that authoritative wisdom he once shared with William Golding.

JOHN MCGAHERN'S LAST novel, *The Leave-taking*, was a mnemonic recycling of scenes from *The Dark* and *The Barracks*. His new novel[3] is an exercise in deliberate self-parody which plays two improbable fictions against each other. In the main story the narrator writes pornography, watches his aunt die of cancer, comments despairingly on the pointlessness of life and has an affair with a woman whom he gets pregnant. In the sub-plot we follow the adventures of Colonel Grimshaw and Mavis Carmichael, the characters in the pornographic serial which the narrator is writing. If McGahern's intention was to set this pornographic fantasy of perfect sex against the inadequacies and suffering of ordinary life then his novel fails badly—his sexual lyricism effortlessly bridges both the main plot and the sub-plot. However, I think McGahern's real intention is to create two equally unrealistic fictions, and this points to a fundamental sense of failure within his own imagination. The stylish despair of his earlier work is now recapitulated in an ironical and self-lacerating manner which imperfectly questions the foundations of his inspiration.

This is apparent when the narrator visits his aunt in hospital and comments on the time he is spending with her:

Now that it was taking place it amounted to the nothing that was the rest of our life when it too was taking place. It would become part of our life again in the memory. In both the apprehension and the memory it was doomed to live far more vividly than in the taking place. Nature had ordered things well in that we hardly lived our lives at all. Our last conscious moment was the moment when our passing nonexistence and our final one would marry. It seemed felicitous that our going out of life should be as similarly arranged as our coming in. And I was ashamed of the violence of the reflections my own emotional idleness during the visit had brought on: the dead of heart can afford to be violent.

Through this arid consciousness McGahern is saying: "We had fed the heart on fantasies/The heart's grown brutal from the fare." Really McGahern is arguing that a radical change of heart is necessary and that this passage from the main story is only slightly more sophisticated than its pornographic equivalents:

The moment is always the same and always new, the instinct so strong it cancels memory. To lie still in the moment, in the very heart of flesh, the place of beginning and end, to snatch it out of time, to move still in all stillness of flesh, to taste that trembling moment again, to hold it, to know it, *and* to let it go, the small bird that you held, its heart hammering in the cup of the hands, flown into the air.

The idea that the passing moment only becomes real in the act of sex is endorsed by McGahern's earlier work, but in this story he is beginning to doubt this view. It's as though he has started to recognise that his nordic lyricism and bedroom existentialism are an imaginative dead-end.

However McGahern's self-questioning is by no means consistent, and when the narrator begins to speculate what marriage would actually be like, a mean-spirited and adolescent voice says something very familiar:

There was a semi-detached house at the head of one of the roads around the Green Goose, shrubbery just beginning to appear above the front garden walls, two iron gates, concrete to the garage door. The roof was red-tiled and the walls were pebble-dashed. A lighted bell above the letter box went ding-dong. Behind the house, on either side of a thin concrete footpath, the long, competing back gardens ran to the glass-topped wall: a piece of lawn, some roses, a cabbage patch, rhubarb, cold frames for early lettuce, raspberry canes that needed cutting back, two apple trees that every year brought vandals. The narrow kitchen was up a step from the back garden, the formica-topped breakfast table, the radio, the clock, the whirring fridge. A carpeted room wasn't far away. There was a solid table and chairs for compulsory entertaining, some

[3] *The Pornographer*. By JOHN MCGAHERN. Faber & Faber, £4.95.

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books on shelves, a drinks cabinet, a tiled fireplace, a TV set. Upstairs two cupids kept blissful watch above the double bed and waiting carry-cot. The curtains that hid the road were hung and frilled. Swelling by my side she'd yawn O boy before she'd kiss and drill. And proudly, stretching towards the line and beaming benediction on the whole setup, she'd hang out her brand-washed flags as good as any.

Certainly the pornographer feels attracted to the garden, but otherwise the queasy fear and distaste which inform this passage are as immature as anything in a novel of the *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* or *Hurry on Down* variety, and I'm not at all sure that McGahern isn't committed to his narrator's point of view here. His middle-class kitchen contains "the roaring oven/Of a witch's heart."

There are several excellent scenes in the novel—the uncle working in his saw mill, the aunt's funeral, the teetotal undertaker who keeps a bar and is sleekly courteous are as good as anything in McGahern's short stories. However, the pornographer's moment of moral awareness sounds very hollow:

> By not attending, by thinking any one thing was as worth doing as any other, by sleeping with anyone who'd agree, I had been the cause of as much pain and confusion and evil as if I had actively set out to do it. I had not attended properly. I had found the energy to choose too painful. Broken in love, I had turned back, let the light of imagination almost out. Now my hands were ice.

McGahern fails to render the woman's suffering and by portraying her through the narrator's eyes as a hearty scheming extrovert he exculpates his glum pornographer. What the narrator is voicing is his creator's imaginative despair, a despair that issues from a failure to recognise that choice is still possible. McGahern is saying that the mnemonic muse of his fiction is dried-up and repetitive—he is recognising that the saw mill, the woman dying of cancer, the merging of sex and death are predictably familiar. Thus *The Pornographer* is a terminal work which may promise a new beginning, a fresher inspiration.

THE IRISH IMAGINATION is dominated by the idea of circles and it tends to view history passively as a pattern of cycles. Although this can be a dangerous view to take, it subtly informs Thomas Flanagan's remarkable historical novel[4] which tells how in 1798 a French army landed in the Bay of Killala to assist the United Irishmen in

[4] *The Year of the French.* By THOMAS FLANAGAN. Macmillan, £6.95.

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their rebellion against the Crown. The story is mediated through several narrators—each of whom has a different viewpoint and style—and in this way Flanagan overcomes most of the standard objections to the historical novel. Through the narrative of an English clergyman we see a civil and decorous 18th-century mind attempting to understand the native Irish who combine "a grave and gentle courtesy with a murderous violence that erupts without warning." The Rev. Arthur Broome is horrified by the excesses of both sides, and he emerges as a decent, sympathetic, if ineffectual character who speaks for the powerless centre of Irish politics—he is unobtrusively modelled on the elderly language teacher who narrates *Under Western Eyes*.

Flanagan has an unerring sense of the parallels between the political situation in 1798 and the events in Ulster over the last ten years. Thus the Mayo yeomanry are the shadowy and bigoted forerunners of the "B" Specials, the secret society called the Whiteboys of Killala is the Provisional IRA, while the brief "Republic of Connaught" parallels Free Derry nearly two centuries later. Flanagan has considerable sympathy for the aims and ideals of the United Irishmen—it's a sympathy I share—but he is also aware of what happens when ideology is translated into action:

> How could we have supposed a connexion to exist between our ideas, city bred, and the passions of peasants? Theorems advanced in a Rathfarnham villa, beneath the cool, benign skies of a Dublin evening, are transformed by the airs of Connaught, country people hanged by indifferent dragoons, pikes piercing the horizon, an Irish-speaking priest bawling out his bloody sermons.

The net of contemporary parallels tightens as the local gentry prefigure Ulster Unionism, and when the English general, Cornwallis, decides he must get rid of the Dublin parliament and its "venal legislators" there is a clear parallel with the prorogation of Stormont. The Act of Union is the elder twin of direct Rule, and Cornwallis's "My God, what a country!" echoes Reginald Maudling's notorious "What a bloody awful country!" Particularly interesting is Flanagan's presentation of Owen MacCarthy, the Gaelic poet who is caught up in the revolution. Through MacCarthy (he is partly based on Seamus Heaney) Flanagan explores the difficult relationship of poetry to politics in Ireland, and he expresses the historical reality which informs Heaney's powerful conclusion to "Triptych":

> *How we crept before we walked! I remembered*
> *The helicopter shadowing our march at Newry,*
> *The scared, irrevocable steps.*

Through the eyes of the sceptical historian, George Moore, we see how Ireland has always been "a maidservant to others":

> When James and William, the two kings, faced each other at the Boyne, the game was Europe, and Ireland but the board upon which the wagers were placed. The history of Ireland, as written by any of our local savants, reminds me of a learned and bespectacled ant, climbing laboriously across a graven tablet and discovering there deep valleys, towering mountains, broad avenues, which to a grown man contemplating the scene are but the incised names of England, Spain, France.

Thus the French general, Humbert, becomes a prototype of those American congressmen who periodically interfere in Irish politics. Flanagan is also subtly aware of the "equivocal" nature of Loyalism, and by admitting every shade of political opinion he builds a rich, intelligent and exciting fiction. Although there are purple passages and moments of costume-drama in this novel, it is a splendid and heartening achievement which must prove influential and enduring.

V. S. NAIPAUL's *India: A Wounded Civilization* was an angry and misanthropic travelogue which powerfully criticised Hindu quietism and Gandhi's philosophy. Despite certain failures of sympathy, it was a worthwhile attempt to provoke the Indian consciousness into critical self-examination. Although my own experience of Indian culture doesn't agree with Naipaul's pessimism, his account was honest, forceful and stimulating. His new novel,[5] however, is a dismal fiction which might have succeeded if it had been published as another travelogue.

The narrator, Salim, is an East African Asian who owns a shop in an unnamed Central African country. He is a flat, languid pessimist who functions as a mouthpiece for Naipaul's self-regarding authorial voice which delivers a series of lectures on African corruption, Asian ignorance, and Western folly. The only convincing character in the novel is Ferdinand, a young African who attempts to discover his identity by "trying on various characters, attempting different kinds of manners." Naipaul implies that Ferdinand is one of "Rameau's nephews", trapped in a parodic cycle and confused by the mingling of different cultures in the dangerous town on the bend in the river. Salim comments:

> He could never be simple. The more he tried, the more confused he became. His mind wasn't empty, as I had begun to think. It was a jumble, full of all kinds of junk.

[5] *The Bend in the River*. By V. S. NAIPAUL. André Deutsch, £5.50.

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The problem here is that Naipaul is using a technique which works in a travelogue but cannot succeed in fiction—he is reviewing a character, isolating him from the living fabric of his experience, and in the most patronising manner refusing to allow him to break out from under the weight of authorial moral comment. Naipaul's snobbish, elegantly average voice speaks with the same fastidious intonations as the voice in *A Wounded Civilization* and the results are at times depressingly comic.

This is especially apparent in Salim's account of his affair with Yvette, the wife of a university professor who was once a close friend of the country's president. Salim describes this affair in a manner that is surprisingly similar to that of McGahern's pornographer:

> Women make up half the world; and I thought I had reached the stage where there was nothing in a woman's nakedness to surprise me. But I felt now as if experiencing anew, and seeing a woman for the first time. I was amazed that, obsessed with Yvette as I had been, I had taken so much for granted. The body on the bed was to me like the revelation of woman's form. I wondered that clothes, even the apparently revealing tropical clothes I had seen on Yvette, should have concealed so much, should have broken the body up, as it were, into separate parts and not really hinted at the splendour of the whole.
>
> To write about the occasion in the manner of my pornographic magazines would be more than false. It would be like trying to take photographs of myself, to be the voyeur of my own actions, to reconvert the occasion into the brothel fantasy that, in the bedroom, it ceased to be.
>
> I was overwhelmed, but alert. I did not wish to lose myself in the self-regard and self-absorption of that fantasy, the blindness of that fantasy. The wish that came to me—consuming the anxiety about letting myself down—was the wish to win the possessor of that body, the body which, because I wished to win its possessor, I saw as perfect, and wanted continuously, during the act itself, to see, holding myself in ways that enabled me to do so, avoiding crushing the body with my own, avoiding that obliteration of sight and touch. All my energy and mind were devoted to that new end of winning the person. All my satisfactions lay in that direction; and the sexual act became for me an extraordinary novelty, a new kind of fulfilment, continuously new.

This is an astonishing piece of writing and it demonstrates the deeply bogus nature of Naipaul's imagination in this novel. He attempts to sound intelligent about the sexual act and the result is a mannered and extremely foolish essay which drily relishes one cliché after another—"an

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extraordinary novelty, a new kind of fulfilment, continuously new." Somewhere at the edge of Naipaul's imagination there is the shadow of a doubt which is voicing its objections in those terms "self-regard and self-absorption", but the doubt is raised only to be over-ruled.

Elsewhere in the novel there are several long unconvincing monologues, and the dialogue is consistently strained. The prose style is never more than adequate and in the descriptive passages it appears to be webbed with a dark gauze which betrays Naipaul's fundamental failure to participate imaginatively in what he describes. As a cultural doomwatcher Naipaul lacks a personal vision of the Good and so is condemned to write merely for an admiring audience—an audience, he fails to realise, which is delighted to hear how awful other societies are. Naipaul's detached negativity is a hollow pose, and noticing this I no longer trust what he has to say.

An Unprovincial Province

New Poetry—By ALAN BROWNJOHN

NOT VERY LONG AGO the idea of an anthology of poetry from the North of Ireland would not have seemed particularly interesting or necessary. Poets from the province of Ulster went any one of their possible three ways, showing no especial tendency to form part of a distinctive group or climate: they found spiritual roots in the south; or they looked to London as the only sensible method of making a name in British poetry; or they dug in in the north itself, and tilled a regional field—like very many of the Scots and the Welsh poets now. Today all this has changed, and the poetry of Northern Ireland has simultaneously come into a closer relationship with what one might call the mainstream metropolitan poetry of Britain *and* acquired a distinctiveness which makes a volume like Frank Ormsby's[1] not only possible without straining too hard to make a watertight compartment of Ulster poets, but somehow obvious; and very welcome.

The Ulster poets themselves will be in a better position than any London reviewer to explain this development and this paradox: to analyse why London and Belfast, which write so differently, have a closer kind of literary understanding than London and Cardiff, London and Edinburgh, perhaps even London and Manchester. But Frank Ormsby's introduction to *Poets from the North of Ireland* provides some valuable leads; and reading between its lines will provide a few more. The Education Act of 1947, which improved Catholic education, may have helped to add to the pool of talent. Certainly, magazines like *Phoenix* (founded in Belfast) and James Simmons' and Ormsby's *Honest Ulsterman* have helped to further a sense of poetic identity in Ulster while at the same time keeping up a two-way exchange with the mainstream British writers. Then the Writers' Group formed by Philip Hobsbaum at Queen's University, Belfast (a successor to Hobsbaum's London workshop of *Group Anthology* fame), played an important role in encouraging some of the best emerging poets, Seamus Heaney, Michael Longley and James Simmons included. These are some of the clear and tangible reasons for the new vigour and self-awareness of Northern Irish poetry in the 1960s, and for the Belfast-London connection; and it's reasonably well established that this poetic revival is *not* intimately and essentially related to the eleven-year torment of the province.

THE OTHER REASONS are less tangible social and cultural ones. The success of several of the new poets of the Sixties with London publishers and British readers may have encouraged both them and later poets to feel that they need not leave the province out of their verse (as Louis MacNeice largely left his oil-lit Ulster childhood) in order to win recognition in England. Connections between the two universities in Ulster and those in Britain, the BBC connection—these may well have given Northern Irish poets a sense of confidence at a time when they could have languished in a sense of isolation at one of the ugliest stages of a long, ugly history. But most importantly, something in the puritan cast of mind bred in Ulster—keeping many of its poets to a fairly strait and narrow traditionalism of form and treatment—appealed to the literary establishment in London; especially when the poets showed indubitable talent. There are not many avant-garde experimentalists among the Northern Irish; trendy transatlantic and European influences seem mercifully to have passed them by; there is very little mere

[1] *Poets from the North of Ireland.* Edited by FRANK ORMSBY. Blackstaff Press, £6.95, paper £3.95.

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fashionableness. There is simply a good number of good poets.

With any anthology drawing upon a geographical area, an editor will inevitably hit a few problems of residence. Was a poet born in Ulster, or did he only live there? What about the ones who went to live and work elsewhere? What if a poet ended up writing very little about the birthplace he left behind? Ormsby solves the difficulties in a manner which might have proved too comprehensive, but which works: his list of twenty poets begins with the oldest living northerners and proceeds down the generations to the youngest poets who have published a volume, including all likely talents who qualify by birth and/or close association with the north. It is thus the Northern Irish poetry of our time; excluding both the 19th-century "colonials" (Samuel Ferguson, William Allingham) and early 20th-century northern participants in the Celtic Twilight, like George Russell (A. E.). And this means the Northern Irish poetry of the last two decades; since the only two dead poets included are MacNeice and W. R. Rodgers and even the older writers here—George Buchanan and John Hewitt in particular—largely came into their own in recent years. So there is more of a natural unity about the selection than might have been expected, and very little incongruity about any name. (MacNeice, so much the urban Londoner, the classic, the BBC man? Between Hewitt and Rodgers he seems to fit in fairly logically, here, having some of the down-to-earthness of the one, taking plenty of the risks of the other.)

DEFINING A "Northern Irish" poetry beyond the point of speculating about its puritan roots (and how it cuts free from them with, in Buchanan's words, an "ex-puritan extravagance"), or of analysing vaguely how it has "responded to" years of violence, is not profitable. It seems better to look at some of the writing which Ormsby's generous selection throws into clearer focus. What the senior poets in the anthology are *not* is guarded and laconic, determined to be reined-in, emotionally invulnerable. They make sallies like George Buchanan's Lawrentian assertions:

> *There is neither war nor peace, there is war–*and
> *peace, not either/or but the two:*
> *rather, if you please, fusion, the play of one into*
> *the other, the blend.*
> *War-and-peace is . . . swallowing resentment,*
> *working with detested*
> *characters, undertaking a keen enterprise*
> *with untrustworthy associates;*

Or they go for a grand style, as does John Hewitt in "An Irishman in Coventry":

> *I took this eager city . . .*

Michael Tippett
An Introductory Study
DAVID MATTHEWS

'What attracts one most in his music is the vibrancy and exuberance it gives off, the feeling it communicates of a richness of temperament and of humanity.' It was with these words that the American Academy of Arts and Letters elected Sir Michael Tippett to honorary membership in 1973, and their spirit pervades David Matthews's book which, remarkably, is the first comprehensive account of Tippett's music.
Intended primarily for those who enjoy the music and would like to know more about the composer and his work, the book describes Tippett's musical development from his student days right up to his most recent opera, *The Ice Break,* and the Fourth Symphony. Throughout Mr Matthews proves a lucid guide to the transformations that Tippett's style has undergone as well as an eloquent exponent of the individual works.
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and scarcely flung a bitter thought behind me
on all that flaws the glory and the grace
which ribbons through the sick, guilt-clotted legend
of my creed-haunted, Godforsaken race.

There is, in other words, a feeling of the freedom to *be* rhetorical and dare large statements; something largely missing from English poetry for quite a long time. If the generation represented by James Simmons, Seamus Heaney, Michael Longley and Derek Mahon (all born between 1933 and 1941) is not neglected in England, the slightly older poets like Roy McFadden, Padraic Fiacc and John Montague may be; and the younger names are not yet well-known. Experience and landscapes beyond Ireland are grafted on to Montague's work; but his "Herbert Street Revisited" sounds his characteristically delicate, poignant note:

. . . put the leaves back on the tree,
put the tree back in the ground,
let Brendan trundle his corpse down
the street singing, like Molly Malone. . . .

And let the pony and donkey come—
look, someone has left the gate open—
like hobbyhorses linked in
the slow motion of a dream

parading side by side, down
the length of Herbert Street,
rising and falling, lifting
their hooves through the moonlight.

Of the newest names, Paul Muldoon may still be the best (he was born in 1951; and it would be difficult to make a list of promising poets under thirty which did not contain several Ulster names). But Tom Matthews' "Private and Sulphurous" observations ("The congregation was/scandalised . . ./And I marvelled at Robert too/Able to read so calmly in the midst of so much hate") and Michael Foley's mordant humour seem to be breaking some new and enterprising ground.

SEAMUS HEANEY'S "The Tollund Man", his now-celebrated parallel between "the old man-killing parishes" of Jutland and present-day Ulster, is probably the best poem in Frank Ormsby's anthology. As its finely-chosen title indicates, *Field Work*[2] returns to the countryside (in Glanmore, Co. Wicklow) and resumes several of those themes which Heaney feels to be essential for the strength and integrity of his work: you earn the right to reach conclusions by working "in the field." Yet conflict and a profound sense of mortality reverberate in this difficult, if sensuously appealing, book. The first half of it is dominated by the elegy: for the victims of two sectarian shootings, and a bombing; for an elderly neighbour; for a musician friend; and for Robert Lowell, "promulgating art's/deliberate, peremptory/love and arrogance." A new kind of cadence, a new complexity, in Heaney, does indeed owe something to Lowell: take the handling of reference, and the use of adjectives, in "September Song":

Remember our American wake?
When we first got footloose

They lifted the roof for us in Belfast,
Hammond, Gunn and McAloon
in full cry till the dawn chorus,
insouciant and purposeful.

But in almost every poem of loss and grieving in *Field Work*, there is a movement back towards life and hope, through some astonishing physical detail assembled in a way which is Heaney's own. The end of "After a Killing" is an example:

You walk twenty yards
To the boats and buy mackerel.

And today a girl walks in home to us
Carrying a basket full of new potatoes,
Three tight green cabbages, and carrots
With the tops and mould still fresh on them.

The words and images could not be simpler, more exact; the placing of them more nice, more touching or more real. It's a kind of precision which marks many of the best poems in this remarkable new collection, something evolved in the harsher, more attenuated cadences of *Wintering Out* and *North* and now turned to less stark and more moving effect. The centre-piece of *Field Work* is the set of ten "Glanmore Sonnets", a celebration—and intimate association—of the countryside and the act of creating in verse:

Vowels ploughed into other, opened ground,
Each verse returning like the plough turned round.

The poet's hope of raising poetry again from "the backs of ditches" is beautifully fulfilled in this book; but he has come to it via the turmoil and suffering encompassed by the two previous books—via the terror in some of the earlier poems in this one—and he is not to be, again, the poet sensuously and easily involved in country matters in *Death of a Naturalist*, where the latent disturbance now seems relatively *un*disturbing by comparison. One result of this journey is the greatly increased complexity (and fascination) of the personal poems in *Field Work*: they positively swarm with symbols, like the full-grown flies

[2] *Field Work*. By SEAMUS HEANEY. Faber, £3.00, paper £1.65.

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emerging from what had been a bag of fishing maggots in "High Summer":

A black
and throbbing swarm came riddling out

like newsreel of a police force run amok,
sunspotting flies in gauzy meaty flight,
the barristers and black berets of light.

It's Heaney's most varied and startling collection, balancing courage and affirmation with a lurking uneasiness and foreboding; and showing increasingly impressive technical range and control.

IT SEEMED well-trodden ground for D. J. Enright to cover in *Paradise Illustrated*, his sequence of poems updating the Fall; I thought the joke had been better done by other, less sophisticated, artists. Now, in *A Faust Book*,[3] he has followed the exhortations of Heine and Valéry to do your own Faust, and come up with an altogether subtler, funnier and more sustained set of personal variations on the legend. His Faust and Mephistopheles are, for one thing, not put so relentlessly through all the latest hoops: the story seems to have compelled Enright to treat it a bit more on its own terms; perhaps a moral in that, about its more convincing relevance to our own times; as when "Mephistopheles declares himself a man of the people":

". . . Surely the power of election must rest
With the people—of whom there are many.
The process may be time-consuming,
But in the end it eats up . . . more than time.

I was raised among powers and principalities,
But deep in my heart I'm a democrat.
I believe there's a soul in everybody."

A Faust Book moves steadily through the Faust tale from beginning to end, getting most mileage out of its potential for modern academic and political satire; and using a considerable variety of forms. Enright perennially defines the boundaries of human achievement—of human decency and honesty—by outlining the cynical plausibility of the forces of darkness. In the past, he's rarely done the positive side with much conviction since his first two or three books; but his *Faust* comes much nearer to the scope and range of his best earlier work than "middle" Enright, which was always funny, and right, yet infallibly depressing and sometimes repetitive.

[3] *A Faust Book*. By D. J. ENRIGHT. Oxford University Press, £3.25.

[4] *Lies and Secrets*. By JOHN FULLER. Secker & Warburg, £3.50.

LIES AND SECRETS seem, of course, qualitatively different in common usage. But John Fuller, in his new book,[4] insists that the limitations of language *must* betray the truth, and that whatever his *personae* are saying it will be misleading; turning the world upside down, as in his opening poem about Annie, who is trapped in that position on a barbed wire fence. This volume is, indeed, more than ever a kind of teasing dance around the reader, a witty, delicate and haunting game. But it's of the nature of games played seriously to involve energies and motives which usually go with more important activities; and I don't take Fuller's jokes *un*seriously or regard his evasions as frivolous. The two finest set-pieces in a book largely *of* set-pieces are absorbing dramatic monologues (a form interestingly making one of its periodic reappearances); one, "Spirals", about (I think) the mutation of radical, rational beliefs into self-deluding mysticism, the other, "The Most Difficult Position", a brilliantly sustained study of obsession, in this case with chess, and scholarship, and self-esteem. The least satisfactory poems are those which circle too restrictedly in the pursuit of tiny games and devices: the poem wholly in words of three syllables, the batch of joky "Literary Observations." But the more elaborate the game, the more the hint of alarm breaks in: "Musical Chairs" goes through the circling and the elimin-

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ations to end as a parable on the final hollowness of succeeding and surviving:

And One is alone, for one is one,
She blows a sigh for all you did,
Stack the chairs and close the lid,
Who can win when the game is done?
For the music stops, and out you drop,
And all you know is that you know
There's nowhere to hope for, nowhere to go.

"Charades" is in the same vein, life being a children's game turned sinister, a pursuit of a meaning constantly denied until one is sent "out of the room" for the last time. *Lies and Secrets* also has Fuller's justly-praised "In the Corridor", the one about the apparent return to life of the dead friend, the poet Francis Hope, to whom the book is dedicated—a poem that is very much for real. Intelligence, the power to move, and surface attractiveness are rarely combined in a poet, but Fuller has them all in a blend of spoof and dedicated seriousness which becomes more skilful with every new volume.

IN RETROSPECT, some poetry that seemed to break new ground at the time of its first arrival did nothing more novel than successfully define the typical sensibility of its period. Elizabeth Jennings' new volume, *Moments of Grace*,[5] and her *Selected Poems*[6] (a welcome chance to catch up on much work that went out of print with her *Collected* of some years ago) remind us how completely this subtle and remarkable poet refined and perfected—made clear and positive—a characteristically Fifties sort of probing and tentativeness in poetry. It didn't do to embrace experience too wholeheartedly, whether it was private emotion, or aesthetic appreciation, or pleasure in travel; therefore, make something vivid and memorable, if you could, of the limitations you had to impose, as in "Cypresses" (a favourite tree) in the new book:

Those definite proportions, those strong shapes,
Are yet among the randomness of things.
The oxen plough on as the tourist sleeps
And in that sleep he dreams the cypress is
A shadow-thrower, and the dark it keeps
Is the pure essence of all cypresses.

Moments of Grace shows little change from some of the earliest books—has not, for one thing, the technical flexibility of *Consequently I Rejoice*, and shows a return to a quieter tone. But how accomplished she is, and how much some of the poets usually accounted her technical betters could learn from Jennings' handling of half-rhyme and enjambment.

HUGO WILLIAMS REPRESENTS the change to a different, Sixties way of exploring the most vulnerable emotions: in brief, confiding yet cryptic, free verse structures, asking the furniture of everyday living (cigarettes, carrier-bags, teacups) to carry a considerable weight of feeling. Jennings stands alone at night with a transient sense of the power of words to resolve things ("I rule the day/As my mind reaches for before-dawn peace/And there is reason in the words I say"); Williams, also at night, in one of the best poems in his new collection,[7] "Your Way Home", senses the impotence of hope, and stretches out to a distance he can picture only too clearly:

Your gestures have withdrawn
Almost to the horizon, while the rain, filed thin,
Floats in across the miles of flood-fed earth
That will come between us. I can see your car
Move up the slip-road into the London lane.

End of poem. And Williams knows where to stop. Yet the emotional charge may have evaporated before the end is reached: "Bar Italia" starts poignantly, and finishes in a kind of vague rueful-

[5] *Moments of Grace*. By ELIZABETH JENNINGS. Carcanet, £2.95.
[6] *Selected Poems*. By ELIZABETH JENNINGS. Carcanet, £3.95.
[7] *Love-Life*. By HUGO WILLIAMS. Whizzard Press/André Deutsch, £2.95.

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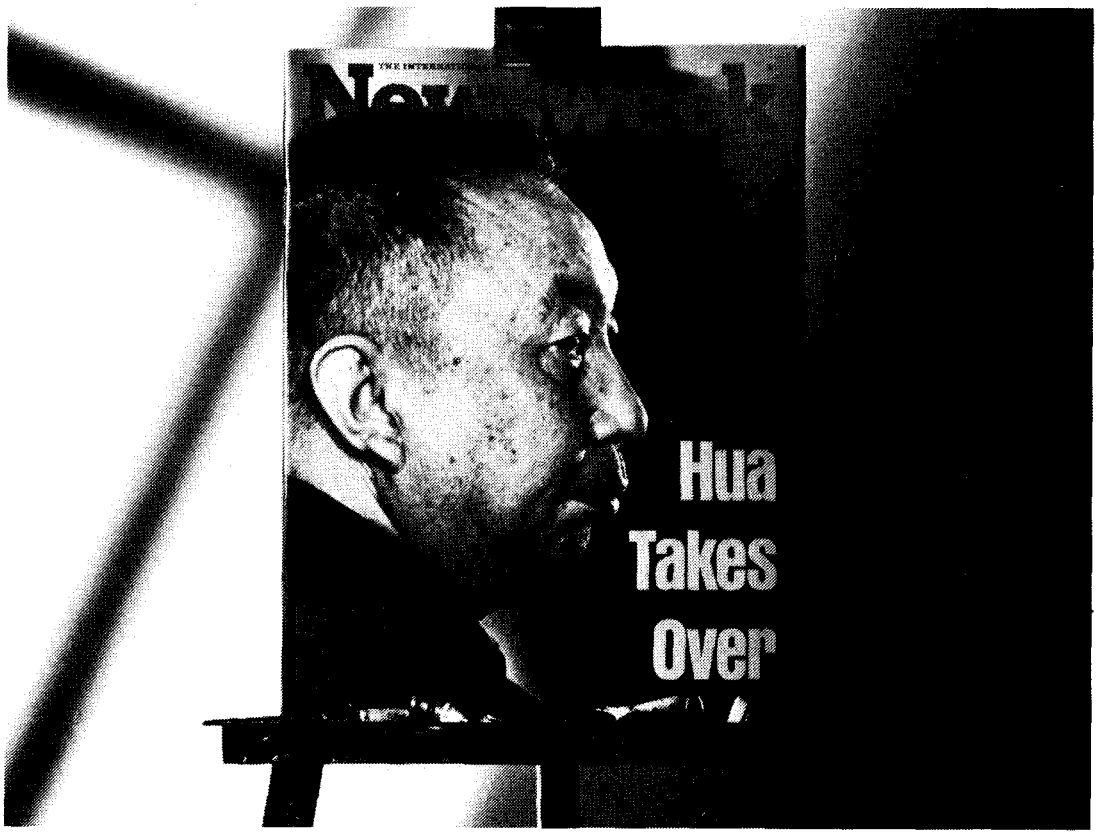

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ness. When these poems are moored more securely to the objects they order, the impact is greater: in "The Ribbon", the obsessive gesture of struggling with the knot you don't have to untie actually achieves the significance and pathos the poet wants:

It seems ridiculous
How everything here acknowledges her touch,
Including me, including this tangled ribbon.

Perhaps you were right after all
And I make too much of it. I'll just sit here now
And try to undo these knots—
I'll be with you in a minute, if you can wait.

THREE NEW VOLUMES from Harry Chambers/Peterloo Poets testify again to the good value of the best of the small presses. Anna Adams essays, in her first full-scale book,[8] a reply to Auden's *Letter to Lord Byron*, in the same Rime Royal. Neither Byron's cavalier colloquial insouciance nor Auden's adaptation of it to his own personality are easily caught; but she has a very good, a very entertaining, try. She hasn't quite the egotism to proffer her own whims and fancies and self-admirations as automatically interesting in the Byronic or Audenesque way, but she often manipulates the verse form well, as when she writes of a writing block:

I challenge anyone to slip a knife in
between last year's last word and this year's first:
no fullstop, semicolon, comma, hyphen
intrudes to separate my neatly spliced
word-rope that meets over the year gone past.
I've crossed its deep crevasse on flying skis,
ignoring all its horrors in deep freeze.

John Gurney's *Wheal Zion*,[9] set in the Cornish tin-mining country, is set as well almost entirely in resolute and unrelieved iambics: the aim is dignity, grandeur even, for some powerful, harrowing subject-matter, and the whole thing is seen and felt vividly enough: see "The Boy Driver", and "Schoolroom By An Arsenic Mine":

the cropped heads, and the smocked and stitching arms
gone back into the granite with the rest;
the picking sheds of wind, the tips of spoil.

But the book feels too loaded down by this very deliberate technique; the air needs to be let into the poems more, as in "Blunham Mourns Dr John Donne, Rector, 1631" and "China Clay Workers 1840."

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WILLIAM SCAMMELL[10] SEEMS the best new Peterloo arrival, most at home among natural objects ("Nature Reserve", about a swan swallowing a frog is a corrective to any illusions about that stately and symbolic creature, and a *very* good late example of the Horrid Animal Poem of the Sixties)—and adroit with urban landscapes and life-styles. I find the "occasional" poems here, literary set-pieces and elegies, unsuccessful. Down in "The Barrows, Glasgow", or up on the fells at "High Lorton", there is an impressively vigorous management of detail:

A path winds up beneath funereal pines
whose branches nail down all the winds
and takes you to a drop: there in a space
populous with unlikely trees
bolt upright on tall rock, or clawing
at the cliff, lush weeds, strange groupings
and grotesques of stone and wood stand gaping

It's a mixed and uneven book, but a most promising debut all the same.

[8] *A Reply to Intercepted Mail.* By ANNA ADAMS. Harry Chambers/Peterloo Poets, £1.35.
[9] *Wheal Zion.* By JOHN GURNEY. Harry Chambers/Peterloo Poets, £1.95.
[10] *Yes and No.* By WILLIAM SCAMMELL. Harry Chambers/Peterloo Poets, £1.50.

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LANGUAGE

Mrs B Says So

Jeff, Randle, Smellfungus & Others—By D. J. ENRIGHT

WORDS ALONE are certain good, said the poet. And any book of or about words is bound to have something to offer, especially at a time of shrinking vocabularies. It must be said at once that by no means are all the words in Mrs Byrne's *Dictionary*[1] either unusual or obscure or preposterous, except perhaps to an absolute *abecedarian* ("a person learning the alphabet; a beginner").

> *Abattoir, adipose, alembic, almoner, amanuensis, aperient, autodidact, benison, biretta, blancmange, bonhomie, brindled, burble, cairn, caryatid, chockablock, collocate*

—such inclusions make one wonder whether vocabularies haven't declined further than one had feared.

But plenty of items remain, either instructive or entertaining or both. *Jeff* ("printers' dice game using pieces of type metal") explains a lot, while it is interesting in itself to hear that *pozzy-wallah* is British slang for "a jam lover",[2] and that *ingle* can bear the meaning "a homosexual boy-in-residence." Not Angles, nor angels, but ingles.

The blurb claims that the *Dictionary* is "a most helpful reference for students, writers, or anyone unable to locate just the right expressive word in a standard dictionary." This—as long as one knows the word in the first place—cannot be gainsaid. For the writer of school yarns there is *tolly* ("to light candles after hours: British school slang") and *epistemophilia* ("abnormal preoccupation with knowledge")—"Take that, you epistemophiliac!"—not to mention *randle* ("a nonsensical poem recited by Irish schoolboys as an apology for farting at a friend"). For the writer of a tale involving Red Indians and fishing rights there is *Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg* ("Indian name for a Massachusetts lake: 'You fish on your side, I fish on my side, nobody fish in the middle'"). The romantic novelist will be grateful for *acronical* ("happening at sunset or twilight"), even though the Oxford Dictionary spoilsportingly assigns the word especially to the rising or setting of stars, and for *kalokagathia* ("a combination of the good and the beautiful in a person"), *suppalpation* ("gaining affection by caressing"), and *humicubation* ("lying on the ground in penitence"), followed by *thalassotherapy* ("an ocean cruise as therapy").

Essential for the historical novelist are *acutiator* ("in medieval times, a sharpener of weapons") and *awm* ("forty gallons of wine in old England"), and—if he specialises in the grandeur that was Rome, the glory that was Greece—*centesimation*, though it carries only one-tenth the sensation value of "decimation", and *petalism* ("the custom in ancient Syracuse of banishing a citizen for five years").[3] Waiting for the problem novelist are such treasures as *philematophobe* ("a woman who dislikes kissing"), *agunah* ("a woman whose husband has deserted her and who may not marry without divorce or proof of his death"), *basophobia* ("inability to stand because of fear of falling"), *xylophobia* ("fear of wooden objects; fear of forests"), and *cagamosis* ("unhappy marriage"); while novelists of a more extreme tendency will seize on *ipsism* (an advance on "masturbation"), *anililagnia* ("sexual desire for older women"), *arpagee* ("a raped woman"), *blissom* ("to copulate with a ewe") and of course *anhedonia* ("the inability to be happy").

WE SHALL ALL OF US be happy with *seeksorrow* as an alternative to the ugly-sounding "masochism", *quakebuttock* as a variation on "coward", *bovrilise* as a more flavoursome substitute for "epitomise", *agomphious beldam* instead of the well-worn

[1] *Mrs Byrne's Dictionary of Unusual, Obscure, and Preposterous Words.* By JOSEFA HEIFETZ BYRNE. Granada Publishing, £5.95, paper £2.95.

[2] Eric Partridge glosses *pozzy* as "jam: military; perhaps ex a South African language", so possibly *pozzy-wallah* originally referred to the quartermaster of a South African regiment serving in India.

[3] It is left to the Oxford Dictionary to explain that *ostracism* in Athens was effected by writing the name of the proposed exile on potsherds, whereas with Syracusan *petalism* the name was written on olive leaves.

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"toothless old hag." Also with *clinomania* ("excessive desire to stay in bed"), which should surely get one a doctor's certificate, while *matutolypea* ("getting up on the wrong side of the bed") is another diagnosis worth remembering. One never knows when *truttaceous* ("pertaining to a trout") might come in useful, or *didine* ("dodolike"), *doseh* ("a Mohammedan custom of riding over the prostrate bodies of dervishes"), or *yepsen* ("cupping the hands; the amount cupped hands can hold"). Similarly, *spousebreach* makes a change from "adultery" (and if you want a rare word for its opposite there is *hereism*), although *adulterine* is doubtfully an improvement on the uncouth epithet "bastard." This unhappy event is often due to *gamophobia* ("fear of marriage") or to *agenocratia* ("opposition to birth control"). Incidentally, when reproved for bad language you can now say: "But *fukfuk* merely denotes an animal's innards. Mrs B says so."

I DO NOT WISH to be a *smellfungus* ("a grumbler or fault-finder"), but is a *balaclava* "a full beard: British slang" and not a woollen helmet? Mrs B defines *decameron* as "a collection of 100 stories written by Boccaccio", but isn't the point that they were told in ten days? *Dorcas* is explained as "a Biblical woman who made clothes for poor people", but no reference is given to "Dorcas Society", a WVS-like organisation; while *forel* one would think is an old term signifying the case or binding of a book rather than "a book jacket."

Mrs B's treatment of *undinism* seems a trifle genteel: is "the association of water with erotic thoughts" really all it means? On the other hand, her definition of *wyvern* is unexpectedly vulgar, as well as less than accurate: "a two-legged dragon with a snake on its ass"—when we come to *onolatry*, "ass-worship", we could well make donkeys of ourselves. (In fact this word is basically different from *pygophilus*, "buttock-loving".) Like many otherwise decent and respectable people, Mrs B may be touched by *grammatolatry* ("worship of letters or words"), she may even be a bit of a *logolept* ("a word maniac"), but there is not very much *aischrology* ("'dirty' language") in her Dictionary—she herself, by the way, is defined as the daughter of the violinist Jascha Heifetz—nor does she pander to *grapholagnia* or "a more than passing interest in obscene pictures."

THERE IS, HOWEVER, an occasional oddity in the phrasing of her definitions. Is the description of *lycanthropy* as "insanity in which the patient thinks she's a wolf" a piece of feminist tit-for-tat or she-for-he—or is Mrs B satirising the female sex? It is not her doing that *pinchpin* means both "a married

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woman who insists on her rights" and "a prostitute", for Partridge assigns the same (if more explicit) definition to *pinch-prick*, low coll., obsolescent. But *sermocination*, "a speaker quickly answering her own question", leaves Mrs B's intentions in doubt, while the faint scorn in *antinomian*, "a Christian who believes that faith alone will see her through", suggests a low opinion of women, and so do *philodox*, "one who loves her own opinions; a dogmatist", and *autologophagist*, "one who eats her words." Can these unhappy conditions be specifically *thelyphthoric* ("that which corrupts women")? On the other hand *rep*, "formerly, a dirty old woman, now, a dirty old man", may point to an awakening of feminist feeling,[4] while *bovarism*, "man's romantic conception of himself", looks like a total turning of the tables. But then *frotteur*, despite its masculine ending, is defined as "someone who gets her kicks by rubbing against people in crowds". . . . The fact is, I fancy, that Mrs B, caught on the horns of that sexisto-linguistic dilemma facing us all, is only trying hard to be fair in her distribution of dreadful examples.

THERE IS ANOTHER THING about words. Words without thoughts never to heaven go, said the poet. They may be man's best friends, but they are also his worst—no, his most malicious—enemies. If *catachresis* ("incorrect use of a word or phrase, especially from any etymological misunderstanding") is to be avoided, anyone setting out to write about or to collect words must be perpetually on his guard. Mrs B is sometimes off her guard. To define *Realpolitik* as "militarism" *tout court* is so inadequate as to approach *verbicide*. And to give "a reformed prostitute" as the sole meaning of *convertite* is simply wrong: when Jaques remarked

> *"out of these convertites*
> *There is much matter to be heard and learn'd"*

he wasn't proposing to join a band of Magdalenes. (One rather wonders whether Mrs B can be a *shaconian*, a term she explains as describing "someone convinced that Bacon ghosted Shakespeare's plays." Is her definition right? Or does the word really refer to someone who believes that Shakespeare ghosted Bacon's essays? Is it another instance of handwriting misread? Can Mrs B's *Dictionary* itself be in part *allonymous* or "ghostwritten"?)

One's faith in her reliability is shaken when one meets the entry for *mont-de-piété*: "a public pawnshop; French = mountain of pity." Oh no—"mountain of piety", less humane but much funnier. It is the more disturbing in that this is one of the very few cases where Mrs B gives the etymology[5]: in her preface she tells us quite sternly that "this is not a book in which one may find romantic stories about word origins" since "etymological books abound and proliferate like drosophilae." (This unusual word is absent from her *Dictionary*, but research reveals that *Drosophila* is a genus of fly and, moreover, one much favoured in laboratory studies of heredity.)

BUT A DICTIONARY without etymologies is inevitably a poor thing. One misses them the more in Mrs B's, not only because one would dearly like to know the romantic story behind the use of *zondek* as a slang term for "pregnancy test", but because of an uneasy suspicion that Mrs B is just a little *ultrafidian*, or gullible, and at times her unusual words are simply foreign ones, her obscure words are archaisms, and her preposterous words are technical terminology or (like the long-winded enzyme requiring 1,913 letters which, to avert an outbreak of *jeff*, I shall refrain from quoting) scientific formulae.

But enough of this *logomachy* ("*1.* war with, or about, words. *2.* a word game"), for I fear I too am growing long-winded—or, as Mrs B's *Dictionary* more pleasingly has it, *aeolistic*. . . .

[4] No, Mrs B is merely being right: *rep* appears to have shifted sex. Partridge describes it as obsolescent in its male application and, by 1850, already obsolete in its female application.

[5] She is misleading, at the least, in her explanation of *grangerism*. James Granger's *Biographical History of England* wasn't in itself "richly illustrated" with "pictures and designs from the books of others." Its copies bore blank leaves on which the owners could paste pictures torn out of other books etc.

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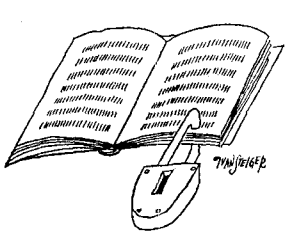
Letter from Moscow

The Case of the "Metropol" Writers

By Gerd Ruge



IT SEEMED AS IF a time-bomb was ticking in literary Moscow, and that a clear decision would inevitably be reached in the dispute between a group of recognised, popular authors and the functionaries of their Writers Union. But the conflict over publication of the anthology *Metropol*, petering out in a series of stilted reproaches from the bureaucracy and in petty punishments, is fading from Moscow's intellectual scene without any real consequences. The administration—which initially launched a strong attack at meetings of the Writers Union—has carefully tried to avoid the questions posed to it, and thus sidestep the trouble caused by the demands of the *Metropol* authors.

Metropol is a gigantic thing of some 800 pages, each displaying four typewritten sheets. In addition there are illustrations—modern, skilful graphics which are extremely attractive to look at. Among the authors of this projected, but unpublished, anthology are Vassily Aksyonov, Vasil Iskander, Andrei Bitov—three writers whose stories, printed in the official periodicals, are for many Soviet readers among the most interesting and lively material to be found in the Moscow bookshops. With two younger authors, Victor Erofeev and J. Popov, they formed the editorial committee, whose names moved a series of other respected writers to contribute. From the outset, it was planned to publish *Metropol* without control or censorship from the Writers Union chief controllers. Contents apart (the 26 contributors included such poets as Bella Akhmadulina and Andrei Voznesensky, who has recently been honoured with a high official prize), it was the attempt to publish uncensored material which embittered the Union executive. These were manuscript contributions to Soviet literature which had previously been "condemned to years of wandering and homelessness." A whole reservoir of such pieces had already been openly submitted to publishers, and sometimes even accepted—only to be set aside or "reconsidered." They were manuscripts, then, which the authors could certainly have made public without incurring political difficulties, work which had sometimes even elicited approval or admiration but which in general was "too new-fangled", too "modernistic", too "frank" in the treatment of erotic and sexual themes for official publishing houses. The editors freely agreed that the main purpose of their anthology was "to broaden the creative possibilities of Soviet literature" and so help to "enrich" Soviet culture and "secure its reputation" both at home and abroad.

Had the anthology appeared, it would undoubtedly have had this effect. It would have been interpreted not as a unique breakthrough but as proof of the possibility of examining and probing from various standpoints the realities of life in the Soviet Union. But the narrow perspective of official editing boards does not allow a diverse view of this kind; the functionaries jealously insist on their right to select, to decide what Soviet literature should be. Felix Kuznetsov, first secretary of the committee of the Moscow Writers Union, explained to me how authors should go about their business. Anyone genuinely concerned with Soviet literature should refer interesting new ideas to his local friendly writers' organisation. On request, new enterprises will be discussed "creatively" in order to select all the "really valuable" material which through "some misunderstanding" has not appeared in a magazine or in book form. "And then free access—to any Soviet literary publishing house."

The *Metropol* authors knew all about this process, so tidy, so succinctly described. It was exactly what they wanted to avoid. Ten copies of the anthology were circulating quite openly as "work-in-progress" among the Moscow literati, but were not submitted for approval to the officials of the Union, who, naturally, knew about its contents. Instead the editors and authors announced a kind of "private view", and invited writers, artists, and intellectuals from the literary world of Moscow. As it happened, the Moscow café in which they were to meet was "closed" on precisely that day: it had been forced to announce an unscheduled holiday. All very embarrassing, all very comical, but the triviality was not untypical of the official actions that followed.

It must have seemed pointless simply to expel the *Metropol* editors and writers from the Union. This move was considered, and produced as a threat; but the expulsion of such a well-known and popular group of publicly revered authors would have caused something of a furore. After all, these were no "dissidents" distributing some anti-Soviet underground magazine, but thoroughly respectable writers of undisputed talent who wanted to describe the life of their country and use fairly modern literary methods to do so, even if these were rather

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extraordinary for Moscow. Naturally, when the editors were asked to appear before a meeting of the Moscow Writers Union, the official critics resorted first to tested methods of political denunciation. Their literary anthology would "aggravate the international climate." They were supplying "reactionary forces abroad" with ammunition against the USSR. They were even endangering the SALT agreement by conveying "a distorted picture of Soviet reality." These reproaches on the part of the functionaries apparently did not galvanise the higher Party leadership into any sharp censure of the offending authors. True, Leonid Brezhnev did not even reply to a written appeal in which the *Metropol* editors complained about the "bureaucracy" and "inflexible working methods" of the functionaries. But it seems that the leadership wanted for once to keep out of this writers' tiff.

LITTLE CAN BE SAID about the literary impact of *Metropol* while it remains unpublished.[1] The discussion within the Writers Union tells us more about official assumptions concerning contemporary literature than about the anthology. Not a few sniped at the supposed "pornographic" content of some of the contributions—but here Western readers must remember that even the officially approved novels of a Heinrich Böll can be published only in expurgated versions in the Soviet Union, which gives some idea of how bureaucratic Moscow defines pornography. Rimma Kasakova, one of the talents from the time of the explosion in lyric poetry twenty years ago, touchingly suggests (probably quite sincerely) where she wants to see the limits set:

> "I remember that the poet Alexander Prokoviev once said it was not in the tradition of the Russian people to speak unchastely about love. What we have here, however, is pure sexual pathology. We cannot allow it. . . ."

"Chasteness in speaking about love" is, then, a requirement for Soviet writers. In everyday life in Russia questions of sex and eroticism are relatively seldom discussed; and then only coarsely and crudely. People give vent to pent-up, repressed feelings rather than demonstrating a sympathetic, understanding, perhaps even delicate attitude towards an aspect of life which Soviet critics regard (in D. H. Lawrence's old phrase) as "a dirty little secret." In the upper echelons of Moscow, with its life of liaisons, affairs, and divorces, "chasteness" is not exactly the highest moral law. The only rule is: do not speak about such things.

In one successful popular historical novel about the notorious monk Rasputin at the Czarist court, readers may exercise their own imagination when Rasputin disappears into the next room with the Czarina to console her after his own particular fashion. By such virginal devices, the imaginative capacity of the reader is partly protected, partly excited. The business with Rasputin, incidentally (it bears no relation, of course, to *Metropol*'s more sophisticated literary style), has another ironic aspect. It highlights the discrepancy between official appraisal of "the people's healthy sensibilities, which must be protected", and real sensibility. When the Western pop-group *Boney M* appeared in Moscow, they were forbidden to perform their hit number—Rasputin as *Russia's Greatest Love Machine*—because it would "offend" Soviet audiences. Meanwhile the song was to be heard in every restaurant where a band played between Minsk, Baku, and Vladivostok. On my recent 3,000-mile journey I got the impression that it is well on the way to becoming a national folk-song.

ADMITTEDLY the cultural functionaries do not claim they want to see life portrayed as it is. They merely want to establish how it should properly appear in literature.

> "The naturalistic view of life as something low and disgusting, as something that brutally distorts the human soul, a view through the keyhole, or through a crack in the closet door, is, as everybody knows, not in the least new."

Kuznetsov announced this as though he often spends his evenings reading books which give a "naturalistic" or "brutally frank" portrayal of life. Vladimir Gussev attempted to discredit the anthology in similar fashion, claiming that this kind of writing has been around since time immemorial:

> "The prose takes a vulgar Freudian direction. 'Freedom' and 'liberation' are principally manifested not in the variety of artistic styles, but rather in the great number of physiological references and in the description of perversions which our press, quite correctly, is usually loath to publish. Iskander's story 'The Little Titan with the Great Sex' is intentionally exaggerated. Sexual rivalry between man and python, impotence and potency under the powerful sway of sadistic darkness or of bestial elements—these are the clichés of mediocre Freudianism."

The functionaries do go so far as to confirm that many of the pieces are indeed worthy of publication, but naturally "only in accordance with usual publishing practice." Technically, it was a tricky situation. After all, many of the 26 authors are respected, even revered, members of the Writers

[1] It has now been published in Russian by Ardis in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and will shortly appear in the West in English and French translations.

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Union. They are accused by other colleagues of including in the anthology contributions which have already in fact been published with official approval, sometimes in large editions. This reproach is directed mainly at Andrei Voznesensky, Vasil Iskander, and Bella Akhmadulina. Were they, by printing already published poems and stories, trying to "deceive" readers about the severity of the restrictions to which Soviet writers are subject? Of course, these three, like some of the other contributors, generally have no problem getting most of their works printed with official approval, but one can safely assume that there are other works which they cannot publish, cannot even write, or dare not even wish to write. Their contributions to the anthology were proof of "fraternal solidarity" with the aims of the young editors; the desire to describe and illuminate life by more complex, more precise means than functionaries of the Union deem proper.

THE METROPOL AUTHORS had promised each other that there would be no compromise, that they would never desert their combined front. Their demand that the anthology be printed as it was—in its entirety, or not at all—was seen by the Writers Union as a kind of blackmail, an attack on their vital prerogative of supervision, on their controlling position of bureaucratic power. When the first threat of expulsion had fizzled out, it was followed by barely concealed threats of economic sanctions. Sergei Michalkov had already hinted as much when he added, during his contribution to the debate:

> "Nor do I understand the position of S. Lipkin. The representatives of the national literatures whose works he has translated but which have not yet appeared in print are now considering whether they ought not to wait until another Lipkin can be found. . . ."

Semyon Lipkin (whose own poems have rarely been published in the Soviet Union) is a gifted translator who has made the great national literatures of the Persians and the Turks available to the Russian reader. It may be hard to find another Lipkin. But Michalkov's threat was directed at the fact that the income, the livelihood, of the old lyric poet and translator (he was admitted to the Writers Union by Maxim Gorky in 1934) could now be curtailed or withdrawn. Lipkin responded with a protest which was thoughtful, dignified, and touched with irony.

Other contributors to the anthology began to suffer economic setbacks. Films based on their stories were removed from studio shooting schedules. A collected edition of Akhmadulina's poems is still unannounced. This is painful, but not sufficient to change the attitudes of these established writers. For their unestablished (and perhaps not so talented) colleagues, who are quite dependent on such extra earnings, it is a serious warning. Most of the *Metropol* authors were able to evade such pressures. Andrei Voznesensky skilfully counteracted the attacks against him: at the height of the *Metropol* debate he actually turned up at the North Pole—in order to praise the success of a group of skiers from the Young Communist League, and dedicate a poem to them on the spot.

THE WEAKEST POINT in the non-conformists' united front seemed to be the two youngest members of the editorial group: Erofeev and Popov. Erofeev is the son of the Soviet ambassador in Vienna (and of course his father had to give information to his superiors in the Moscow Foreign Office about the literary activities of his unruly offspring). But he refused to be intimidated, although the sanctions seemed most serious for him and Popov. Expulsion from the Writers Union would make it impossible to have their work published; it would end their careers and deprive them of a living. Their colleagues announced that they would all leave the Union if the two were expelled, and this expression of solidarity sounded sufficiently convincing to make the functionaries wary. Popov and Erofeev were not expelled. Instead, their membership was only "rescinded", which was stretching the regulations a bit. Erofeev, Popov and their friends thereupon maintained that both young writers were still members of the Union. Of course, no one can really say what that will mean in practice. The bureaucrats showed obvious insecurity in this unusual stratagem which enabled them to avoid the risk of a mass resignation of well-known writers. In turn, several of these writers must have heaved a sigh of relief. The disciplinary action—which they do not recognise as expulsion—saves them from carrying out their threat of resignation. Some members of the Union would prefer to forget what they said in the debate condemning their *Metropol* colleagues. Among the Moscow writers there may be a majority for reinstating Popov and Erofeev. Meanwhile, negotiations continue in search of a compromise. The time-bomb on the literary scene is ticking more and more faintly.

FROM THE START it had been clear from the discussions within the Writers Union that the *Metropol* authors were to be subjected to virulent attack. But none of the critics seemed inclined to rise to a dramatic, glowing, partisan speech of indictment. Things were just not the same as in the days when Boris Pasternak was reviled by political functionaries and openly condemned by embittered

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colleagues. No Alexei Surkov rose to his feet to recite Party-line accusations with old-style Bolshevik pathos. Instead, the *Metropol* affair was treated "bureaucratically", at the relatively low level of Union functionaries and literati.

As far as one can judge, *Metropol* is not an anthology of new and powerful directions. After all, most of the authors belong to the Soviet literary establishment, and have learnt to play according to the rules—without abandoning the hope that these rules, and hence the freedom to "portray reality", might be extended. The dispute has demonstrated what is possible in this respect in the Soviet Union today, and what is still unattainable. The authors are sniping at the administration of a Union which is firmly resolved to maintain its grasp on its privileges, and on the position of literary control. It could probably have reacted more prudently, more generously. Publication of the anthology would not jeopardise the internal and external security of the Soviet Union. A small Soviet edition would, rather, have strengthened the reputation of the USSR abroad, strengthened belief in the widening possibilities for literary work, and spared the Russians much criticism. Inside the Soviet Union the small circle of intellectuals (which nowadays is reasonably familiar with modern foreign literature) would have had the opportunity of forming its own judgment. And obviously *Metropol* could have been published without "offending" the feelings of the sensitive masses.

But the Writers Union has its own good reasons for sticking to its guns. The *Metropol* authors were prepared to submit their anthology to the appropriate state authorities for printing but not for censorship. They required that the text be printed unaltered. Of course this would mean undermining by a little the resources of power and discipline of the Union's top administrators, though it would not as yet signify the outbreak of that "anarchic" state of affairs where anyone in the Soviet Union can write as he pleases and print what he likes, for there are other Party organs which have to approve publication. But the Writers Union—the functionaries on the committee as well as the mass of more or less talented members—would have forfeited some measure of its power and prestige.

FORMALLY, IT CAME TO no more than that. The higher Party organs obviously preferred not to bring in the heavy artillery in this dispute among the literati. The leaders do not want to create martyrs and force recognised, popular writers into the dissidents' corner. On the contrary, in recent years the Party has tried to make it plain, by means of generous prizes and support for unorthodox, sometimes critical writers, that a greater breadth of theme and treatment is permitted, even desirable, so long as political taboos are not violated or power structures shaken. Thus there are reprints of Yury Trifonov's novels (which raise serious problems of the present and of "the unmastered past", without of course transgressing certain limits to frankness). Valentin Rasputin could receive a state prize for his rather sombre novels, which were presented as the works of a provincial writer full of love for the old, simple world. And Andrei Voznesensky was presumably the target of reproaches levelled at *Metropol* poems which were "objectively ambiguous in the ideological relationship with their conceptual content, and contained sundry hints and allusions." He too received a state prize last year.

Yury Trifonov, Valentin Rasputin, and Bulat Okudzhava do not belong to the *Metropol* circle, although they are on close and friendly terms with many of the contributors. Okudzhava advised them to avoid increasing existing antagonisms in their conflict with the Union. Trifonov regarded the *Metropol* project as a mistake from the very beginning; it seemed to him to jeopardise unnecessarily the process of gradually extending literary freedom. Nor were the writers who no longer belonged to the Writers Union among their numbers—the real dissidents, that is: those who left the Union or were expelled, like Voynovich, Vladimov, Kopelev.

PRIZE-WINNERS, EXPELLEES, border-line cases. Recently they all met—with the exception of Rasputin—in the home of a colleague to honour Heinrich Böll (influential President of the International P.E.N.). Böll returned home uneasy and worried. It seemed to him that, in preparation for the Olympic encounter, the state's intimidatory and oppressive measures had become stronger and that this heralded a "new phase" of intensified repression. But perhaps Böll, rendered oversensitive by decades of viewing with alarm (his latest novel is even entitled *Siege Precautions*), was mistaken in his gloomy judgment. Though the *Metropol* affair could make little contribution to the extension and deepening of Soviet literature, State and Party have shown equally little desire to make it the occasion for strong disciplinary measures.

The limits of "liberalisation" are clearly defined, but so are the brakes which restrict the power of officious functionaries in the state's cultural policy. In Moscow these days, cultural life—sometimes lively and interesting, sometimes grey and bone-dry—is no stage for heroes and martyrs, or for great villains of the pathetic political catch-phrase.

Yet it is being said that Vassily Aksyonov will "never again be published in the Soviet Union" and will be made to leave "if he wants to or not." Hard-liners in the Writers Union consider him "the ring-leader." Early on, they devised the strategy of warning the other *Metropol* writers that Aksyonov would go, and leave them behind: now they hope to fulfil their own prophecy.

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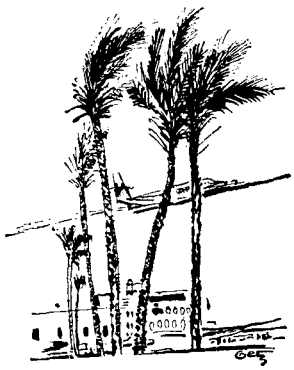
POINTS OF THE COMPASS

The New Towers of Babylon

By Peter-Hannes Lehmann



OUR "SHADOWS" are faithful and they have been hard on our heels since we passed through the Army check-point outside Erbil, 250 miles north of Baghdad. In my rear mirror I can see three army lorries and two jeeps. Once, on a quick U-turn we passed them, and I counted just under 50 men in the lorries and two officers next to the jeep drivers. We waved, they remained rigid, and we never ever got any closer. Doggedly they follow us from village to village—a corps of bodyguards which keeps its distance but clings to us nevertheless. In addition there is our very own official entourage which, counting drivers, interpreters, and "tourism experts", totals nine in all. Is it then still so dangerous in Iraq?

We drive through "the autonomous region" as the Iraq Republic's north-east is called today. Some five years ago its inhabitants were still calling it "Kurdistan." At that time the 1½ million Kurds (who still form the majority of the population in this corner of the country) were fighting under their legendary General Mustapha Barzani for an independent Kurdistan, independent from the central government in Baghdad. Barzani lost out when the Shah of neighbouring Iran withdrew the support which he and the Americans had guaranteed for so long. Those Kurds who after the crushing of the revolt did not emigrate with Barzani made their truce with Baghdad and in return were granted the right of limited autonomy, of cultural and local "self-administration" in their territory.

But a real peace does not seem to have broken out. On every hillock we pass we can see trenches or a barricade of sandbags and on every second one a small Iraqi Army defence post. Occasionally the barrel of a tank gun is seen lowering menacingly over the rolling green countryside from some more dominating position. There are guards on every bridge, and still a military convoy came up from behind and another moved towards us. "Mini-revolts" still flicker up here and there, and risings by the Kurds in Iran keep the military on the alert.

Baghdad obviously wants to make quite sure of security, and we are given proof of this in the Kurdish mountain village of Akoyan. There are about 1,000 inhabitants, and their mud-brick houses cling to the slope on a series of terraces. The surrounding landscape is one of which even the Swiss would be proud: well-kept mountain pastures, magnificent views, snow-capped peaks in the distance, and everywhere the smell of flocks of sheep and goats and a scent of delicate wild flowers.

A squad of soldiers moves from house to house, barging in without knocking, and searching the rooms for weapons. Kurds of "the autonomous region" are not even allowed to carry the traditional knife in the belt, still less a rifle. One soldier is carrying a plastic bag full of almonds and other nuts which he bought cheap in the nearby village; on the terraced roofs women rock their children in brightly-coloured wooden cradles; two peasants are trimming the handle of a spade with an axe. Down below in the square in front of the village oak tree the village children are singing a Kurdish song followed by an Arab one. The children do their lessons in the open, "class-rooms" being divided by lines of stones.

SUPERFICIALLY the Kurds are well off despite all the military supervision by the Iraqis. Akoyan is no exception. In other Kurdish settlements too there are schools, medical centres, electricity, and new roads. And for inhabitants of villages razed to the ground by the Iraqi Army the Baghdad socialist government has had new "model villages" built with all the trappings, including even TV aerials on the roofs.

KHOBATA is one such model village. The government made a present of the houses—all with running water and electricity—to the Kurds and also paid them compensation for their lost property. The Kurdish village headman, the

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Mukhtar, tells us why his people have confidence in the Arab government in Baghdad. "Barzani", he says, "was always getting us to fight but never did anything for us. The Baghdad government, on the other hand, offered us peace and paid us for it as well. They give us work on state farms and anyone who is not allotted work receives 15 dinar a month (about £25). . . ."

We go to the school where, at the behest of the government, illiterates have to learn reading and writing in the afternoons. Anyone failing to attend this obligatory extra-curricular tuition risks being fined up to 100 dinar (£160), a full two-months wages for a farm labourer. The grown-ups come in hordes, particularly the women in their traditional black dress.

Our photographer, Fred Ihrt, tries to take a few pictures of the women in school. They crawl shrieking under the benches and cannot be persuaded to emerge by either the blandishments or the orders of their teacher. A picture of a living person, particularly a woman, is regarded as immoral (and not only among the Kurds). Evidently the Koran says so, and even today the Koran calls the tune everywhere in the socialist republic of Iraq where Islam is still the official religion.

The ruling party, the Arab Socialist *Ba'ath*, values its good contacts with the Moslem priesthood—and not solely since the Shah next door was ousted by the religious opposition. Indeed the government has been financing construction of new mosques; and El-Bakr, the President, has recently returned from a pilgrimage to Mecca. The *Ba'ath*, formed in Syria in 1941, knows that even today Islam is still the strongest force binding all Arabs together. Reunification of "all fraternal Arab peoples" in one "great Arab empire" is still the goal of which Iraqi foreign-policy functionaries dream, and a start is shortly to be made by uniting Iraq and Syria into one combined country. After all, their forefathers built the Tower of Babylon in order to get "nearer to God", and present-day plans are equally lofty.

The *Ba'ath* Party came to power eleven years ago. At that time General Hassan El-Bakr overthrew his corrupt predecessor General Rahman Aref, who had used the national budget mainly to enrich his own family. Since then substantial funds (about £15m in 1978) have been going into development of the country. The Party would appear to be in full command, organising the army and the well-nigh ubiquitous secret police (trained by East Germans). The Iraqis are so efficient that they are already being dubbed "the Prussians of the Middle East."

Baghdad

TWENTY-TWO IRAQI OFFICIALS *have been sentenced to death by firing squad for conspiring against the government of President Saddam Hussein. The sentences were passed by a special tribunal set up on July 28 after the Ba'ath party and ruling Revolutionary Command Council announced the discovery of an anti-government plot.*

Those condemned to die included Adnan Hussein, who was promoted to deputy premier a few days before the announcement of the alleged plot. Also listed were Mohammed Mahjub, appointed education minister in a Cabinet reshuffle last month, and the Ba'ath party secretary-general, Mohie Abdul-Hussein. The special tribunal, headed by Naim Haddad of the Revolutionary Command Council, has imposed jail terms ranging from one to 15 years on 33 defendants.

President Hussein took office last month following President Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr's resignation for health reasons. Mr. Haddad, who headed the special tribunal, was sworn in as one of four deputy premiers last week.

NEWS ITEM

THE STRONG MAN at the head of this country, largely unknown in the West and execrated as a nest of terrorists, is the 41-year-old Saddam Hussein, a comrade from the earliest fighting days. With a mixture of socialist commitment and pragmatic sense he is attempting to build up Iraq economically and keep her "free from political blocs", according to his motto "Military aid from the East, Technology from the West." Saddam Hussein is determined to push on with the essential industrialisation of the country using the petrodollars provided by indigenous oil wells which, according to present estimates, can continue to gush for 100-200 years. At the same time he appears to be quite determined to realise the "national dream"—to turn Iraq, with its 12 million inhabitants in an area nearly twice the size of West Germany, into the political leader of the Arab world. Both these objectives are pursued at a tempo which, with Arab conditions, can only be described as breathtaking.

"Since the fall of the Shah", we were assured by one German industrial representative in Baghdad, "Iraq is one of the most important Middle Eastern countries for us. The Iraqis take the best they can get, and they pay on the dot. . . ." Since the beginning of the year he has sold well over £4m-worth of machine tools to Iraqi state concerns and is hot in pursuit of further even larger commissions; and the same goes for the 91 other German representatives of firms which have spread their tents in and around Baghdad, all scenting fresh big business.

The best business comes from the State industries which dominate some 4/5ths of the entire economy. Private enterprise, which still exists under the planned socialist economy—hotels, building firms, taxi drivers, and repair shops—still

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does business, always provided that the necessary official licences are obtainable. For the moment it works.

Everywhere in the country building seems to be going full steam ahead—new roads, schools and hotels, hospitals, cement factories, poultry farms, and modern agricultural installations. The sky above the oil town of Kirkuk in the north and over the southern port of Basra is black from the smoke of factory chimneys.

Poverty and unemployment, the Third World's cancer, appears practically unknown in the Iraqi economic wonderland—during our 2,000-mile tour I saw only three beggars. Hundreds of thousands of immigrant Egyptian workers are employed as teachers, doctors, hoteliers, or building advisers. If they had to leave one day as a result of the government's anti-Sadat campaign almost the entire economic machinery of this oil state would be dislocated. Admittedly many Iraqis only just make out because the State-guaranteed minimum wage is calculated fairly severely; it ranges from 2 dinar (£3) a day for building workers and farm labourers to 70 dinar (£110) per month for academically qualified civil servants. In compensation, however, the State holds down prices—by subsidy—for all basic food commodities, taxi fares, restaurant meals, and rents; no one need starve.

I SUPPOSE the TV aerials on the roadside mud huts symbolise the dream of good fortune for the common man. As we passed through the third TV-bedecked village on the Baghdad road from the town of Samarra we stopped outside a peasant's farm house. Loud shrieks of horror! Four women who had been sunning themselves in the courtyard fly into the house, their hands to their faces, away from these strangely-clad outsiders.

In some embarrassment our interpreter explains that it is not so easy to invade a strange family, particularly in a village where customs are so strictly observed. But the young man who meets us barefoot in the courtyard is not so squeamish, and he invites us into the living-room. On a packing case, with ventilator above, a black-and-white TV is flickering. The blessed thing cost 89 dinar (£150), and it is the only furnishing in the room. The bare mud walls are adorned with one or two photographs from illustrated papers—sturdy footballers, pretty blondes, and there are some blankets and pillows on the floor.

In the next room is a double-decker 600-litre fridge—again, the only piece of furniture—and in a room further on is a super-modern electric cooker with grill and almost as many dials as an astronaut's computer. The family saved for some two years for these luxury gadgets. The father owns 40 sheep and five acres of land on which he grows wheat, barley, potatoes, and vegetables; what the family does not eat is sold on the market. In addition the eldest son contributes about 30 dinar (£50) a month; he is a soldier and his garrison is about three miles away. To enable the Army to get hold of him at any time his commander has even had a glistening telephone installed in the shack, and I have to touch it to make sure it's real. The neighbours also have a TV and fridges in their mud huts.

That evening we called at the Ministry of Information in Baghdad, for our permit for a further trip to the south had not yet arrived. It was 7.30, an hour-and-a-half after sundown. In every room in the Ministry work is still going on—an astounding sight for any traveller in Arabia. It would be unthinkable, for instance, in Egypt where five indolent secretaries can easily spend their day guarding a half-empty filing cabinet without attracting attention. There, as almost everywhere else in Arabia, they work on a principle christened "the Arabic IBM computer" by disillusioned development workers—*I* for *Inshallah, B* for *bukra, M* for *moku*, meaning roughly "If God wills nothing will happen tomorrow. . . ." Elsewhere not even the doorkeeper would be at his post in the evenings, still less the Minister.

But Saad Gassim Hamudi, the Iraqi Minister of Information, is at his post; what's more, once we have explained our troubles to his assistant, he grants us an interview immediately. We are offered heavily sugared lemon tea which tastes like watered-down liqueur. The Minister comes quickly to the point. By supporting the "so-called" Carter-Begin-Sadat peace plan our West German government has definitely made no friends in Baghdad; and if Bonn assists this scandalous affair financially, Iraq would regard that as an unfriendly act.[1] Unless Bonn finally abandons its "pro-Zionist" policy and rids itself of its "Jewish guilt-complex" the government sees little prospect of profitable cooperation. Bonn, says the Minister with a malicious side-swipe, should take its cue from France who does not allow herself to be blackmailed by Israel and looks at Arab problems more "objectively." (No wonder that France has forced West Germany into second place in trade balance with Iraq.)

We ask about Iraqi support for the Palestinians and their terrorist commandos. Hamudi reacts angrily: "Who do you think we are? Savages who come down from the trees every now and then to slaughter and eat each other? What you call

[1] The posters I saw on the wall of a street in Kerbela illustrated an Iraqi foreign policy—the battle against the peace treaty between Begin and the "traitor" Sadat whose old pictures are slashed and defiled. In one poster the five-pointed "Star of Judah" and the pointed Pyramids overlap each other appositely; and a swastika in the middle is supposed to symbolise the "fascist" nature of the Israel-Egypt peace treaty.

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'terrorism' is the Liberation Struggle of our Palestinian brothers whose Homeland has been stolen from them. We shall help them unconditionally!" Even if, we interject, innocent civilians are killed, hostages taken, aircraft hi-jacked?

"We have never allowed a hi-jacked plane to land on our territory", the Minister says, "and we never shall. We do not regard hi-jacking as a good method, but we have never issued instructions to our Palestinian friends as to how they should conduct their own Liberation Struggle. In this struggle it seems inevitable that civilians will be implicated. Was it any different when European resistance to Hitler took shape? . . ."

Does Iraq support and offer asylum to German terrorists as well? Hamudi: "I know the nonsense invariably written by the European press when it describes Baghdad as a centre of international terrorism. We make a sharp distinction between revolutionary movements such as the Palestine Liberation Organisation and Mafia bands on the lines of the Baader-Meinhof gang which fight only for their own cause." The Minister became increasingly emphatic. "We detest people who are not really political, have no true revolutionary motivation. We are against gangsters, and there have never been any in Iraq. It is a sheer lie. We will always fight alongside our Arab brothers, but we shall never allow non-Arabs to be trained on our soil—and in our country nothing takes place without our knowledge and without our agreement—that you must believe. . . ."

WE WERE ALLOWED TO DRIVE south next morning. The semi-steppe, with its grassy tufts standing out like islands, seems even flatter than the northern pancake-like farmland between the Tigris and the Euphrates. The wind in our faces carried swirls of dust, and it became very much warmer. Villages on either side of the road became rarer, and here camels and donkeys took the place of cars and motor-bikes. Near the vast cemetery of the holy city of Kerbela where Imam Ali, founder of the Moslem Shi'ite sect, is buried, hundreds of enormous water-pipes are stacked: the city is to get a new water supply system.

There is no alcohol to be bought either in Kerbela or in neighbouring Nejef (where Khomeini, the Iranian Shi'ite leader, was housed for some years after fleeing from the Shah). Instead there are masses of polished prayer stones on which the believer must press his forehead as he kneels. A packet of stones costs as much as a whole bread loaf plus stew and vegetables, but sales seem assured: over 200,000 pilgrims visit these holy places annually.

The desert is steaming, as cement-factory chimneys and brickwork-ovens spew their gases into the scorching sky. Smoke trails across the country like long black fingers; herds of camels come grunting by; modern power lines span the century-old tracks. Suddenly a hot dry blast of air rolls over us. As we struggle for breath a wall of dust descends on us, blowing a fine hot powder through every chink and covering everything with a carpet of fine flour. A sand storm.

We stop. The heavy lorries bringing shipload upon shipload of imported goods from the Persian Gulf port of Basra to Baghdad thunder past. The drivers have taken off their *"keffieh"*, the large speckled head-cloths, and wound them over mouths and noses leaving only a narrow slit to see through. Wheels must continue to roll for the revolution; moreover, there is a bonus if the goods arrive on time.

Next day Rumaila, the oilfield, proves to be a bitter disappointment. There is the familiar jumble of oil-tanks and pipelines. But where is the dark

Coup in Iraq

IRAQ'S SOCIALIST-REPUBLICAN Revolution, in which a military coup ousted and killed the Royal Family and its supporters, will be celebrating its twenty-first anniversary this summer. It was launched in the name of democracy, Arab brotherhood and social welfare. It has predictably brought dictatorship far more stringent than any imposed under the monarchy; a succession of bloody coups and palace revolutions reminiscent of the Shakespearean cycle; open warfare against the Kurds amounting to near genocide; and strained relations, coming close to actual war on several occasions, with Iraq's Arab neighbours. In addition, the Left-wing military rulers have sent assassins abroad, this country included, to murder fellow-Iraqis, other Arabs and Israelis.

The present coup together with mass arrests reaching into the very summit of government, army and Ba'ath party took place earlier this month. It was heralded by the resignation of the president, Gen. El Bakr, on grounds of ill health which, if not actually true at the time, is unlikely to be long delayed. Many of those arrested will shortly be tried for treason, some posthumously.

Similarity with recent palace revolutions in South Yemen and Afghanistan seems too strong to be coincidental. In each case, a Left-wing military régime playing with fire in the shape of Soviet arms and bases while trying to maintain overall independence notwithstanding, thereby annoying the Russians, was ousted by a harder-line junta more to Moscow's liking. First statements issued by the new rulers in Baghdad give the same impression. The prospect of Soviet control over Iraq's oil and unfettered use of naval bases in the Persian Gulf should surely evoke some reaction in London and Washington.

DAILY TELEGRAPH (London)

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secret so jealously guarded by the authorities in Baghdad? In the depth of drilling, or in the daily level of production? The experts reckon Iraqi oil exports at 3 to 3½ million barrels a day, which in 1978 must have brought in some eleven billion dollars for Baghdad. Ever since Harold Brown, the US Defence Minister, openly hinted to the OPEC barons the possibility that Washington might ensure its oil supply from Arabia by force of arms, the Iraqis—oil-exporters No. 3 (after Saudi Arabia and Iran)—seem to regard even the size of the nuts and bolts on the pipelines as a military secret.

BACK IN BAGHDAD we are permitted a military visit—not to the real Army but the "People's Army." This is the Ba'ath Party's reserve-force formed of party and trade-union members. Each one of them has already done his two-year military service in the armed forces, and now the "People's Army" requires them all to polish up their skill by attending supplementary courses (target practice, drill).

We look in at the final day on the firing ranges of the Peoples Army unit "Baghdad South." Some 5,000 men have assembled on a bare field about six miles outside Baghdad. Those not actually engaged in firing their nine shots at a target from an automatic rifle are merrily picnicking with their Kalashnikovs at their side. Some of the more elderly family men, whose *embonpoint* threatens to split their tight uniform jackets, have taken off their new and uncomfortable canvas boots to cool their sore feet. Cries of triumph from the bazooka firing-point: once again a member of the People's Army has hit the target. But it is only the third time in an hour-and-a-half that a hit has been scored on the dummy tank 250 yards away; nevertheless the commander who accompanies us is pleased with his men. "Military skills alone are not decisive", he says. "Revolutionary conviction and unconditional commitment to the Party are more important."

LATER THAT DAY Fred Ihrt and I are strolling through Baghdad. The legendary oriental metropolis is a city totally rebuilt, and that has only one advantage—it is clean. At 4.30 every morning squads of municipal cleaners sweep along the streets collecting every scrap, every scraggly cigarette butt. The great cement Moloch of some four million inhabitants with its spattering of mosques covers an area of 24 × 21 miles.

When, during the pre-holiday evening rush-hour, Ihrt climbs on to the railing of a traffic island to photograph a national memorial, two civilians, unmistakably secret policemen, suddenly appear. Next to the memorial is a rostrum from which the Minister of Youth is to address the "Young Pioneers" in two hours' time.

It takes quite a bit of time for us to dissipate the suspicions of the secret policemen, and to convince them that we are genuinely interested in the general Baghdad scene and not—with some evil intent—in the Minister's rostrum. But then it was all our own fault for going out, for once, without an escort—the "proper headquarters" should have been informed "in good time" and we would have been able to take photographs undisturbed. . . .

What had the Minister of Information said? "In our country nothing takes place without our knowledge and without our agreement—that you must believe!" Never a truer word, Minister, never a truer word.

The way we live

In rooms whose lights
On winter evenings
Make peepshows of our lives—

Behind each window
A stage so cluttered up
With props and furniture

It's not surprising
We make a mess of what began
So simply with *I love you.*

Look at us: some
Slumped in chairs
And hardly ever speaking;

And others mouthing
The same tired lines to ears
That long ago stopped listening.

Once we must have dreamed
Of something better.
But even those who swapped

One partner for another
Have ended up
Just like the rest of us:

Behind doors, moving outside
Only to go to work
Or spend weekends with mother.

Vicki Feaver

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DISCUSSION

Inquest on a Movement

By John Vaizey

THE CHANGE OF government which took place in the United Kingdom as a result of the election on 3 May can be represented in a number of guises. It could be seen as the end of the upsurge of pro-socialist opinion which began in the late 1950s and which, despite the defeat of the Labour Party in 1959 and the narrowness of the Labour victory in the general election of 1964, was in fact a tide of opinion which swept on to include most of the articulate opinion-formers of the time. But it has notably failed to convince the majority of electors and, even more, the majority of intellectuals in 1979. It might be seen, even more apocalyptically, as the beginning of a significant reversal of the tide of opinion which first began to flow in 1938—when the country began to gear itself up towards a mobilisation of resources for the Second World War (which turned into a fully-fledged socialist economy in 1940 at the height of the War, when all resources were allocated by government action according to the priorities set by the government in the light of War needs). It was a process which Richard Titmuss described as the origins of the post-War Welfare State; and it continued to be the dominant way of looking at the organisation of society for peaceful purposes from that time until quite recently.

At the other end of the spectrum from the apocalypse, it could be thought that any general election is really about turfing out one set of politicians and substituting another set for those who have been turfed out. Politicians' aims and ambitions are principally concerned with their own careers and eventually it will make little difference to anybody except themselves. (This is the A. J. P. Taylor view of history.)

I am of the generation which grew up during the War, was deeply moved by the rhetoric of the 1945 election, and thought that the Attlee government (in office for the six years following the defeat of Winston Churchill in July 1945) represented the political ideals of a good society. I became a member of the Labour Party at that time, served it both nationally and locally, worked closely with some of its leaders, and continued to think that the ideas that it stood for and the proposals which it sought to enact were more generally in the public interest than those of its opponents.

I am, I hope, sufficient of a realist to take the view that politics has to be conducted by ordinary politicians, that is to say, human beings with all the range of human potentialities for good and evil and for self-interest and public interest. Therefore, the discovery that members of the Labour Party are fallible is no more inclined to affect my own political views than the discovery that Senator Kennedy is not unconnected with drowned ladies would affect my views on the merits or otherwise of supporting him as the Democratic nominee in 1980 (though there is a wider range of issues which are affected by this consideration!).

Why, then, did I finally decide that I was not a socialist? The answer lies at several levels. In the first place, socialism is about giving power to the state. The state, in fact, consists of civil servants to whom more and more discretion is granted. This discretion is exercised by them in a manner which is not susceptible to public control except by the chance revelations of journalists or politicians. Furthermore, it is quite clearly profoundly corrupt in the sense either that they directly favour their own friends, or alternatively and more deeply corruptly, they favour those who advance the acceptable received opinions. Thus the spread of the power of the state, while to some extent it is necessarily beneficent (in the sense that it enables good things to be done, like creating and operating the National Health Service), also extends the power of the central bureaucracy. This is critically important, as far as I am concerned, in determining my own attitudes, since there is in principle little distinction to be drawn between the power of the British civil service, the Indian civil service, or the Polish civil service in most particulars, though of course their general drift is conditioned by the circumstances of the society in which they find themselves. But wherever it is, I distrust bureaucracy.

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AS A SOCIALIST, my own view had been that there were certain principles in society which were better than others. These included some concept of social justice and equality, of fairness of treatment between different social groups and individuals (the sexes, the races), and some idea of a progressive advance in living standards. It seemed to me that once these ideals had been established and accepted widely throughout society, the techniques by which they might be put into practice could be discovered through the operation of the social sciences. It was my own version of the theory of Social Democracy that it was the work of the social scientists and the application through social engineering to society which distinguished Social Democracy from Communism. And certainly as far as somebody like Anthony Crosland was concerned, the normal process of "Policy development" was to establish a policy target, to investigate the facts, to study alternative methods of achieving the aims, and then to choose the best. For this reason it must be said that Mr Crosland's tenure of successive offices had very few practical outcomes (except the cancelling of the Channel Tunnel between Britain and France, and of the third new London airport which was to be built on the edge of the North Sea).

This process now seems to me to be fundamentally misconceived. In the first place, I doubt very much whether, except at a very general level, it is possible to set up a series of social and political objectives which command widespread let alone universal consent. Thus, in my view now, any process of social idealism is bound to come into conflict with other sets of beliefs which are no less sincerely and genuinely held. Secondly, I see no evidence whatsoever to suppose that social scientists have in fact made any discoveries of any significance which can be translated into social engineering in any meaningful way. Thus, despite the work of generations of criminologists, little more is known about Crime than that it is largely committed by adolescent males, a fact which was first discovered over a century ago. There is no commonly accepted technique for dealing with widespread Unemployment or Inflation which are the current economic problems which face Western societies. There is no acceptable definition of social class, let alone any understanding of the processes by which the social structure of society is changed or, even if there were such understanding, how the change might be altered by a process of legislative enactments and executive enforcement of the legislation.

IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT the alternative view of the theory of society to the highly articulated one which has just been advanced is, of course, that it is a dark and turbulent river which flows through time, very little understood, and that the task of politicians, and indeed of anybody holding a position of responsibility, is merely to try to keep the raft of civilisation afloat—a view which is most eloquently expressed by Michael Oakeshott. It seems to me that though this view is unacceptable on the Left, it is far more realistic than the optimistic social engineering view which I had hitherto espoused. Any person of intellectual bent must always try to keep different and conflicting ideas alive in his mind, if only to expound them to his students or his readers, and in order continually to test the reality of his views against experience. Increasingly, as British society has lurched from one disappointment to another, whether in the field of economics, social reform, criminology, or whatever, I have been driven to the more pessimistic Oakeshottian view.

Up till now, however, the Conservative Party has embraced the Social Democratic theory as enthusiastically as the Labour Party. The differences between the two have been entirely about the interpretation of that theory. For example, the Conservatives tended to be "monetarists" in their view of the way that the economy should be managed, whereas the Labour Party has been neo-Keynesian, in the sense that they believed in "fine tuning" of the economy, whereas on other matters (e.g. crime) the Conservatives have tended to be more "interventionist" than the Labour Party itself.

In recent years, however, a new and darker strain of Conservative philosophy has emerged which is deeply suspicious of all social engineering. It is particularly and profoundly distrustful of all increases in bureaucratic power, since it regards the bureaucracy as inherently uncontrollable and inherently working primarily for its own interests and only secondarily those of the public it purports to serve.

It is this view which has increasingly seemed to me to be realistic, and one which is more worthy of intellectual sympathy and support than the naive and optimistic views which have dominated public policy since the Munich crisis in 1938.

What are the practical consequences of adopting this view?

THE PERSPECTIVE seen from Europe of political events is, of course, different from that seen from other parts of the world. A third of the continent, including ancient cultures like Poland and Czechoslovakia, has been for over thirty years under Soviet Communist occupation. There is little if any doubt that free elections in those countries would result in the virtually complete elimination of Marxist socialism and its institutions. Furthermore, in those parts of Europe which have free elections, the Marxist socialists have been both under electoral retreat and are in intellectual disorientation, partly because of the growing evidence of the

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intellectual incoherence of Marxism, and the evidence of the generation after generation of oppression in the Soviet Union and the other countries. Kolakowski's recent three-volume masterpiece is perhaps not the latest, but certainly the most important of works analysing the Marxist failures. This has put the Left in Western Europe in a difficult position, and they have increasingly adopted pragmatic ameliorative programmes. These reform programmes have largely been based upon the "discoveries of the social sciences"; but it has become increasingly clear that these social sciences are themselves in a state of intellectual incoherence, and furthermore, have little or nothing to say which is of practical importance. Therefore, government after government has been driven into trial-and-error positions. It is also clear that those governments which have been pragmatically successful, whether they be nominally socialist or not, have tended to follow the West German and French guide-lines. In my view the election in Britain represents a switch towards the West German and French approach to the problems of Europe and of the UK in particular.

IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES the formulation of an intellectual philosophy of an Oakeshottian kind is far more significant than the apparent ideological revival of Hayekian liberalism.

It is thus at this level that I found myself unable any longer to take the view that there is such a thing as a theory of Social Democracy which can form the basis of a coherent socialist programme. I have, therefore, found myself in the position of supporting that group of politicians which seems to me most likely to attempt to break out of the "social engineering" tradition and to adopt pragmatic positions which will emphatically seek to cure the ills from which British society has been suffering. These are economic underachievement, and a general sense of disillusion which has arisen perhaps from the new world-order in which the British people find themselves. This new set of values and this new ordering of priorities seem to me to be more fully understood in the Conservative Party than in the Labour Party, which is still divided deeply between the Marxist and the Social Democratic wings. I would not despair, with David Marquand, of the possiblity of creating in ten or fifteen years' time a party which was as overtly pragmatic and as committed to liberal values as the German Social Democratic Party. But in fifteen years' time I shall be getting too old to think about politics.

Pollarding

There is no correct age for pollarding
trees and dreams. Ideally
one should wait until the girth
is five to seven inches,
the dream just filling out.

The first cut may be made some six
feet up. If the dreamer's
not allowed to go too far
a short ladder may be
used to bring him down.

Side shoots ought to be removed
or else they turn into
new dreams. It's a winter job,
December is ideal.
Don't let a dream see spring.

To protect cut-ends and hopes from rot
a fungicide should be used
but a quick wipe-over with old diesel oil
or a bit of real life
is cheaper and just as effective.

Diana Hendry

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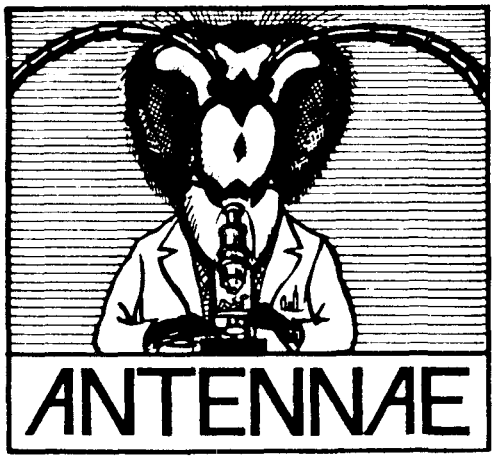

Coming to Terms with Parapsychology

By John Beloff

IT IS NO USE pretending that one can discuss parapsychology as one might do any more or less obscure branch of learning where what is called for is to make known certain facts or to expound certain key ideas. For what is at issue here is, precisely, the legitimacy of the field itself and the validity of its findings.

To talk about the problems that preoccupy the parapsychologists themselves and fill the pages of their specialist journals[1] would mean little to the uninitiated. What they demand to know is whether something important is going on here about which they ought to become better informed or whether it is all a load of nonsense anyway that can be safely ignored. As one who has always been intrigued by the question and who has been actively involved in the field for about twenty years, I ought to be able to give a straight answer. However, even if I were to do so my impartiality would be challenged; and so, in what follows, I shall try instead to offer a few pointers and guidelines which I hope may be of help to those readers who are still undecided but who wish to come to terms with parapsychology.

It is an issue, I have found, which few people approach with a completely open mind; most people hold strong opinions one way or the other. This is, I suppose, inevitable given the controversial nature of the claims involved and their far-reaching implications. But it means usually that one has to work hard to overcome the morass of misconceptions and misinformation that abound in this area before one can get on to any point of substance. Thus on the one side there is a large segment of the population whose appetite for marvels and whose will-to-believe have always outstripped their common sense. It is a sad fact that the growth of science and of education has not made people any less credulous or irrational than they were in former ages. Today they provide a lucrative market for the purveyors of what has been aptly dubbed "pop-parapsychology." This particular brand of literature can be seen arrayed on the "Occult" shelves of any bookshop as paperbacks with lurid covers, as often as not the work of free-lance journalists. They turn out, on examination, to be little more than science fiction parading as science fact and bear only the most tenuous connection with parapsychology, as the term would be understood by, say, the Parapsychological Association. Yet, as I know from talking to my students, this is often their first introduction to the field. It is, after all, so much more accessible than the genuine article.[2]

On the opposite side, to be found especially in academic and professional circles, are those who are too busy or too impatient to distinguish between serious parapsychology and the various kinds of charlatanry, occultism, and pseudo-scientific speculation which have at all times surrounded it and have occasionally seemed liable to engulf it. Their attitude is understandable. The task can be very time-consuming and the controversies into which one finds oneself drawn interminable. Unless some personal reason has alerted one to the phenomena—perhaps a private experience has left an indelible impression (this is not, in fact, uncommon)—it is much simpler to dismiss the whole issue as of no consequence. The history of science is littered with spurious claims and forgotten cults which once enjoyed a certain vogue: why should we suppose that parapsychology is any different?

EITHER WAY, parapsychology still has a formidable communication gap to overcome in its public

[1] There are four learned journals in English: *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* (SPR) (London, 1882–); *Journal of the American SPR* (New York, 1904–); *Journal of Parapsychology* (Durham, N.C., 1937–) and *European Journal of Parapsychology* (Utrecht, 1975–).

[2] For those wanting to pursue the topic I must point out that there is only one comprehensive and authoritative textbook: *The Handbook of Parapsychology*, edited by B. Wolman (Van Nostrand, New York and London, 1977). If access to this large and expensive compendium is difficult, the following British publications should provide a useful point of departure: R. H. Thouless, *From Anecdote to Experiment in Psychical Research* (Routledge, 1972); *New Directions in Parapsychology*, a collection of invited articles which I edited myself (Elek, 1974); and John L. Randall, *Parapsychology and the Nature of Life* (Souvenir Press, 1975).

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relations. Rather than risk being misunderstood, many parapsychologists retreat into their laboratories and confine their communications to fellow-workers through their own organisations, journals and conferences. However, research requires funding; if only for the most practical of all reasons, parapsychology can ill afford to neglect its public image. So far it has managed to survive, albeit on a very modest scale, thanks to the generosity of private benefactors or private foundations like the Parapsychology Foundation of New York; but there is a limit to what one can expect from this source. Perhaps nothing better illustrates the extent of the gap that still exists between the arbiters of scientific policy and the parapsychological community than the fact that papers presenting positive evidence for parapsychological phenomena are virtually excluded from the official organs of science.

Thus, *Science*, the foremost scientific periodical in the USA and the official organ of the AAAS (American Association for the Advancement of Science), will, for the sake of appearances, go through the charade of having such a paper refereed; but every parapsychologist knows for a fact that if he claims positive results his paper stands no chance of being accepted, no matter how carefully his experiment was designed or how conscientiously it was executed. Yet this same journal sees nothing incongruous in publishing an article attacking parapsychology even if it appears to be demonstrably misleading, unscrupulous, and lacking in scientific objectivity.[3] This situation is all the more anomalous in that, since 1969, the Parapsychological Association has been an affiliate of the AAAS.

THE EXISTENCE of such a double standard in dealing with parapsychologists and their critics is a fact worth pondering.

It cannot be put down to an excess of zeal on the part of those who take it upon themselves to be the guardians of scientific orthodoxy and the scientific ethos. The truth is that parapsychology does threaten the *status quo*. If the evidence it presents were to be taken seriously it would be hard to escape the conclusion that there is something profoundly amiss, or at least incomplete, in the world view which science has taught us to accept. Hence those who operate an editorial policy which does everything in its power to prevent parapsychology from being taken seriously do not feel that they are suppressing information but that they are defending the purity and integrity of science.

As a result of this state of affairs, it has become relatively easy to earn a reputation for being hard-headed by setting up as a critic of parapsychology. Your criticisms do not have to be at all accurate—a few well-placed smears and insinuations will take you a long way—for you can always count upon the indulgence of colleagues who will gladly take your "expert" word for it and never bother to examine the evidence for themselves. In the United States recently, a group of avowed sceptics have come together under the auspices of the American Humanist Association to form a "Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal."[4] Despite its grandiose title, "the Committee", as I shall call it, is a debunking society, part of the backlash that has developed in America against anti-science, anti-rational movements which flourished during the libertarian 1960s and with which parapsychology has, unfairly, been identified. The Committee, a more vocal pressure group than the rather staid Parapsychological Association, has been more successful in getting publicity for its activities in the media, and has contrived to persuade many influential people (naive enough to imagine that the word of a "sceptic" is more reliable than the word of a "known believer") that it alone is qualified to pronounce on what is or is not paranormal. The idea it seeks to propagate—that parapsychologists are a gullible lot whose judgment cannot be trusted—is the reverse of the truth. One would be hard put to find any professional group whose members were so hypercritical of each other's work and claims, as anyone who studies their journals or attends their conferences can testify.

THE SOCIETY for Psychical Research of London, the first learned society of its kind in the world, will celebrate its centenary in 1982. A year before he died, the philosopher Henry Sidgwick (who served as its first president) confided to William James (who had also served a turn as president) that had he been told that 20 years on he would be "in the same identical state of doubt and balance that he started with", he would never have believed it.

[3] The offending article to which I allude has the inoffensive title: "Statistical Problems in ESP Research" by P. Diaconis, *Science* (No. 201, July 1978, pp. 130–131). A detailed and devastating critique by E. F. Kelly, after being refused by *Science*, was submitted to the 22nd Annual Convention of the Parapsychological Association in August 1979 and will appear in the proceedings volume published annually by Scarecrow Press (Metuchen, New Jersey) under the title *Research in Parapsychology*.

[4] It is led by a philosopher, Paul Kurtz, and publishes a quarterly journal, *The Skeptical Inquirer* (formerly *The Zetetic*). A breakaway member of the Committee, the sociologist Marcello Truzzi, though a sceptic, was more interested in dialogue than in debunking, and has since founded a rival journal, *The Zetetic Scholar*.

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James himself felt much the same way.[5] Sidgwick's surprise is understandable when we consider that a mass of evidential material of a fairly high calibre was already in existence long before the Society had been thought of; no doubt the eminent scientists and scholars who got together to constitute the SPR must have thought that they would be able to set the seal on such evidence.[6] But doubts continued to pursue their efforts from the start. Today, a hundred years later, after psychical research has undergone so many vicissitudes and transformations, there is still no consensus among the authorities as to what facts have been definitely established or, indeed, whether there are any genuinely paranormal phenomena at all.

WHY AFTER ALL THIS TIME is parapsychology still so weak, so vulnerable and, above all, so inconclusive?

The sceptic has a straightforward answer. Since the phenomena are imaginary in the first place, when submitted to a closer scrutiny they inevitably vanish: they turn out to be due to some combination of incompetence, self-deception, and outright fraud. This is, undoubtedly, the simplest answer and is not without plausibility. But I do not believe that it can be reconciled with a detailed knowledge of the facts—and so I offer an alternative interpretation, based on the assumption that the phenomena are real but that there are, at present, certain impediments which stand in the way of progress in this field. There are four principal impediments that I want to consider: (*1*) The concept of the paranormal which lies at the heart of the credibility issue; (*2*) the low level of repeatability which is the key methodological problem; (*3*) the unsavoury but unavoidable question of fraud; and (*4*) the lack of any agreement among the parapsychologists as to what the phenomena imply, granted that they exist.

1. THE TERM "PARANORMAL" cannot, in the nature of the case, admit of a precise definition, but to call an event paranormal is to imply that it goes well beyond the bounds of what we would otherwise have taken to be physically possible. Thus, to talk of the paranormal is to use a concept that is much more radical than to say of something that it is unexplained or even inexplicable. At every stage in science, there will always be puzzles and anomalies that defy explanation; but it would be confusing to call them paranormal so long as we assume that, in due course, they too will be assimilated into the explanatory scheme of an expanding science. It has been pointed out by Arthur Koestler, among others, that in modern physics there is a wider latitude of possibilities than was allowed by classical physics.[7] Among those qualified to judge, it is still a matter of some dispute whether the phenomena of parapsychology, however improbable or unexpected, actually contravene any known physical laws. Although it is a matter of intuitive judgment whether we acknowledge a category of the paranormal, there are deep historical reasons why parapsychology is currently landed with it.

Psychic phenomena—more technically, "*psi*" phenomena—are best defined as the subclass of paranormal phenomena which are assumed to depend somehow on a mind of some description. It is customary to distinguish two main types of *psi* phenomena: those that involve the acquiring of information about objects and events in the external world by paranormal means (without any known sensory mediation); and those that involve influencing external events and processes by paranormal means (without any known physical intervention). The former is known technically as *ESP* (extra-sensory perception), the latter as *PK* (psycho-kinesis). In addition there figures in the literature an indefinite number of subcategories that depend on the nature of the target information or target process and its spatio-temporal relationship with the individual who is taken to be the *psi* source. Telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition traditionally represent alternative modes or manifestations of ESP.

Although, strictly speaking, a given event is either normal or paranormal, much as a woman is either pregnant or not pregnant, in practice we behave as if there were degrees of paranormality in the sense that, subjectively, we find some events more incredible than others. When nothing more is at stake than the laws of chance, as with a typical laboratory demonstration of *psi*, the average layman is unlikely to feel that his universe crumbles around him if he acknowledges the effect. It is very different, however, if the event in question is, on the face of it, visibly and self-evidently paranormal. Such dramatic phenomena are more likely to be associated with spontaneous cases than with experimental studies—*poltergeist* episodes provide a rich concentration of such incidents. But they

[5] See William James, "The Final Impressions of a Psychical Researcher" in *The American Magazine* (October 1909), reprinted in *William James on Psychical Research*, edited by G. Murphy & R. Ballou (Chatto & Windus, 1961).

[6] For an excellent study of the early evidence I recommend Brian Inglis, *Natural and Supernatural: A History of the Paranormal* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1977), which traces developments down to 1914. See also: Alan Gauld, *The Founders of Psychical Research* (Routledge, 1968).

[7] See Arthur Koestler, *The Roots of Coincidence* (Hutchinson, 1972), Chap. 2, "The Perversity of Physics."

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have also been observed when physical mediums and other special subjects have been tested under controlled conditions. The point I want to bring out is that, unless we arbitrarily decide to restrict our attention to routine statistical tests, there is nothing to suggest that these more bizarre phenomena are more dubious than the relatively trivial effects.[8]

It would be convenient if we could say that the more credible phenomena are also the best attested; it would certainly make it much easier to make parapsychology respectable; but the facts seem indifferent to our susceptibilities. I have met many people who would be delighted to be told that telepathy is an established fact but that we could discount the physical phenomena; yet parapsychology gives us no licence to pick and choose. The dilemma it poses is a stark one. Either we come to terms with the paranormal in its full-blown sense—or else we must go along with David Hume who argued that, in this context, it is always more plausible to suppose that your witnesses are deceived or are lying than to suppose that the events to which they bear witness are miraculous (which is certainly one way of preserving intact one's preconceptions).

2. IF WE WERE in a position to demonstrate the phenomena on demand, the problem of their credibility would no longer arise. As things are, the question is what level of repeatability can we expect?

No one would expect the same level of repeatability in the behavioural sciences as in the physical sciences but there is something notoriously elusive about *psi* phenomena, and it is not surprising that a large part of contemporary parapsychological research is devoted to finding ways and means of making the phenomena more stable. A good example is the so-called "altered states of consciousness" approach, whereby the person who is to be tested is first put into some "*psi*-conducive" state of mind.[9]

Among the states which have been systematically exploited for this purpose are hypnosis, dreaming,[10] deep relaxation, meditation, drug-induced states[11] using hallucinogenic drugs, and, latterly, perceptual deprivation. This last, better known as the "Ganzfeld" technique (the subject sits with translucent goggles over his eyes and with earphones relaying white noise over his ear), is currently the front-runner in terms of the number of successful replications reported from different laboratories.[12] So far the most we can say for any of these techniques is that sometimes they work but more often they do not. Sometimes they work for a while, perhaps while the novelty can still generate the necessary excitement; but then the magic fades and the search for a new technique continues. Sometimes they work with certain experimenters only—perhaps those who believe in them—but not for others. This has become such a commonplace that parapsychologists speak freely of an *"experimenter effect"*—meaning that it is the experimenter himself who, all unwittingly, is the real *psi* source and not the volunteers whom he uses as subjects and influences paranormally to give the correct responses! If there is anything to this idea the outlook for parapsychology becomes even more problematical; it is hard to see how one can build a science on phenomena which are so bound up with individual personalities.

There were times when I was tempted to think that the repeatable experiment might lie just around the corner, and then parapsychology would take off with scientists everywhere clamouring to get in on the act. After many disappointments and setbacks, this daydream has receded. I am now more inclined to think that, possibly for some fundamental reason that we do not understand, *psi* phenomena may be inherently unstable. Perhaps a benevolent nature has arranged it that way to save us the consequences of gaining control over forces that appear to obey no known constraints. Or it may simply be that our time scale is wrong, as William James once suggested, and that the solution of these ultimate mysteries is a prospect for the distant future. At all events, until we have acquired much more control over the phenomena than at present. parapsychology seems doomed to remain an optional extra on the scientific scene. Sceptics and believers may still be confronting each other in a continuing stalemate when the SPR celebrates its bicentenary!

3. FRAUD, IT MUST BE SAID, has run like a scarlet strand right through the history of man's attempts to get to grips with the paranormal. To many fastidious persons this, by itself, is quite sufficient reason to repudiate the whole tarnished field. How can we ever be sure that what we take to be paranormal is not due to trickery or sleight-of-

[8] The point is well brought out in a new book by Alan Gauld and A. D. Cornell: *Poltergeists* (Routledge, 1979). This scholarly treatise of a sensational topic can be highly recommended.

[9] This approach is the theme of Adrian Parker's *States of Mind: ESP and Altered States of Consciousness* (Mallaby Press, 1975).

[10] The application of sleep research to parapsychology was pioneered by the Maimonides Laboratory whose work is described by M. Ullman, S. Krippner and A. Vaughan in *Dream Telepathy* (Turnstone, 1973).

[11] See C. T. Tart, "Drug-induced States of Consciousness", in Part V of *The Handbook of Parapsychology*.

[12] The technique was introduced by Charles Honorton; see his "Psi and Internal Attention States", in Part V of *The Handbook of Parapsychology*.

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hand? The stage magicians, from Maskelyne and Houdini down to Randi and Berglas, have been the most outspoken in their scepticism where paranormal claims are concerned.

While it is natural enough for professional illusionists to think of *psi* in terms of its simulation, there is also a psychological angle to the problem of fraud that we cannot ignore. Granted that *psi* is as elusive as it seems to be, is it not inevitable that at times when it fails to materialise some people are going to fake it? We politely ask our subjects to do the impossible and then, rather than disappoint us, they cheat! We may find it shocking that someone who possesses genuine paranormal powers should stoop to petty deceit; but being gifted has never been a guarantee of moral rectitude.

The classic example in this regard is Eusapia Palladino, the physical medium from Naples whose international career was at its height around the turn of the century. Everyone knew she would cheat if given half-a-chance to do so; but sceptics prefer to forget that the effects she could achieve in this way were quite feeble and that her most spectacular seances were conducted under the most stringent conditions by highly trained and hard-bitten investigators who were often themselves adepts at conjuring.[13] In our own day we have the enigmatic figure of Uri Geller, who at first was hailed by the public as a new wonder-worker but is now generally dismissed as no more than a clever entertainer. He, too, is probably a mixture of the genuine and the fraudulent, although his frivolous behaviour makes it impossible to say in what proportion they may co-exist.[14]

With the advent of experimental parapsychology of the card-guessing variety, which J. B. Rhine inaugurated in the late 1920s, the opportunities for cheating (by the subject, at any rate) were greatly curtailed; they were still further reduced when, in the 1960s, automated testing techniques began to supplant manual test procedures. But, as parapsychologists were soon to discover to their cost, nothing is proof against the possibility of experimenter fraud. Cheating occurs in all the sciences, although in the well-established sciences the damage it can do is relatively short-lived—thanks to the system whereby independent corroboration is demanded before an important new discovery is accepted. When cheating occurs in parapsychology, on the other hand, no such automatic checking can be expected, and the damage can be incalculable.

This is not to say that it is a common occurrence in parapsychology for an accredited academic experimenter to fake his experiments. I can think of only two clear examples; but parapsychology is still reeling from the repercussions.

In the case of "the Levy affair" which erupted in the summer of 1974, the culprit—a young medical graduate, recently promoted by J. B. Rhine to Research Director of the Institute, largely on the strength of his success in demonstrating *ESP* in rodents—was caught by his vigilant colleagues tampering with what was supposed to be a fully automated set-up. In "the Soal affair", on the other hand, the exposure was very protracted because although suspicions were voiced at the time (while the experiments with the subject, Shackleton, were still in progress in 1941), it took the better part of 40 years before it was conclusively shown that Soal had rigged his data, and by then Soal was dead.[15]

Let me say, lest anyone be tempted to exploit these tragic episodes in order to blacken all parapsychologists, that in both cases it was the parapsychologists themselves, not their critics, who uncovered the fraud.

4. IT IS OFTEN SAID that scientists cannot be expected to take an interest in parapsychology until at least the outline of some *theory* has emerged which would make sense of the otherwise incomprehensible findings. At least until very recently, parapsychology was unashamedly empiricist in its approach and wanted the facts to speak for themselves rather than imposing a particular interpretation on them. Within the past few years, however, there has been a spate of theorising, much of it by physicists who have attempted to extend the concepts of quantum theory to embrace *psi* phenomena as a special case.[16] Whether their efforts will bear fruit still remains to be seen; at present the very instability of the phenomena makes it very difficult to devise a

[13] See E. E. Fielding, W. W. Baggally and H. Carrington, "Report on Sittings with Eusapia Palladino", *Proceedings of the SPR* (No. 23, 1909), pp. 306–570.

See also: "Eusapia Palladino" in Brian Inglis, *Natural and Supernatural* (Chap. 35).

[14] The positive evidence on Uri Geller can be found in C. Panati (ed.), *The Geller Papers* (Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1976). An amusing chronicle of events in the stormy career of this extraordinary individual was published in the first issue of the new popular bi-monthly magazine *Alpha* (March/April 1979), starting with Geller's first public appearance in Israel in October 1969.

[15] J. B. Rhine, "Comments: A New Case of Experimenter Unreliability", *Journal of Parapsychology*, Vol. 38 (1974), pp. 215–225. See also Betty Markwick, "The Soal Goldney Experiments with Basil Shackleton: New Evidence of Data Manipulation", *Proceedings of the S.P.R.*, Vol. 56 (1978), pp. 250–277. This cunning piece of posthumous detective work would not have been possible but for the advent of the computer. What Miss Markwick discovered, essentially, was that Soal was in the habit of re-using his random-number series, but with changes in the series that coincided suspiciously often with hits on the score-sheets.

[16] See L. Oteri, ed., *Quantum Physics and Parapsychology* (Parapsychology Foundation, New York 1975). Of particular interest are the contributions of E. H. Walker, H. Schmidt, G. Feinberg, and O. Costa de Beauregard although I am not competent to assess their merit.

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critical test of their hypotheses. All these theories, however, go well beyond anything that is accepted in current physical theory. The time is long past when it might have been thought that *psi* would yield to anything as straightforward as an electromagnetic hypothesis.[17]

There is another school of thought (to which I am personally more sympathetic) which does not believe that parapsychology is simply marking time until its Einstein comes along and shows us how it all fits together. According to this other, older view (one which inspired the founders of the SPR), parapsychology is concerned not so much with "extending the frontiers of science" as with testing the limits of scientific explanation. If there is anything in the traditional conception of Mind as an entity in its own right (distinct from the brain and organism through which it normally operates), it could be that *psi* phenomena represent the interplay of the mind with the material world while temporarily liberated from its absolute dependence on the brain. In that case the role of parapsychology is to provide empirical evidence using scientific methodology for a position which hitherto could be defended only on religious or metaphysical grounds.

Whether parapsychology turns out to be "a science of the future", a pseudo-science, or the ultimate science of Mind-Matter interactions—or (as Koestler and others suggest) deals with a special class of meaningfully, but not causally related events—or whether, indeed, it turns out to be none of these things but something of which we have as yet no inkling—I have learnt from long experience that it is a challenge which, once taken up, is not easy to put down: endlessly perplexing, endlessly exasperating but, for all that, endlessly fascinating.

[17] In spite of this, John Taylor, Professor of Mathematics at King's College, University of London, whose interest in parapsychology began after watching a performance by Uri Geller in a TV studio, adopted the hypothesis that all *psi* effects, both mental and physical, could be explained in terms of low-frequency electromagnetic radiation. He proceeded to experiment with child "metal benders" and other "psychics" and eventually published a popular book, *Superminds* (Macmillan, 1975), which earned him *Psychic News*' accolade as "scientist of the year."

However, after coming to the conclusion that his electromagnetic hypothesis could not be made to work after all, he has abandoned the field in disgust, convinced that all *psi* phenomena must therefore be spurious. See E. Balanovski & J. G. Taylor, "Can Electromagnetism Account for Extrasensory Phenomena?" *Nature*, No. 275 (November 1978), pp. 64–67. His tergiversations provide us with a perfect cautionary tale of how not to come to terms with parapsychology.

Offshore
PENELOPE FITZGERALD
Winner of the 1979 Booker Prize £4.50
Set in a houseboat community of Battersea Reach in the 1960s
'Highly sensitive and beautifully economical' *Lord Briggs, Chairman of the Booker Prize judges*
'The novel evokes with beautiful stylish restraint the whole quality of living moored on the Thames' *Hermione Lee, Observer*

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JOHN HARVEY
Winner of the 1979 David Higham Award £4.95
Set on the factory floor
'It's not merely unusual but also very good, precise, subtle, authoritative, and unexpectedly exciting' *Hermione Lee, Observer*
'In his admirable first novel' *Thomas Hinde, Sunday Telegraph*

Collins

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LETTERS

Banning

ALASDAIR MILNE, Managing Director of BBC Television, has pointed out to us that we were mistaken to state, as we did in writing ("Criticism & Self-Criticism", October) about the banning of *Brimstone and Treacle* and *Scum*, that he had "not given any of the playwrights, much less the public, any reason for his decision to ban these plays." We now discover that he wrote a private letter to Dennis Potter giving his reasons for refusing to transmit *Brimstone and Treacle*. He also took part in a *Tonight* programme discussion with TV critic Peter Fiddick about the banning of *Scum*. In neither case, however, did he have private or public discussions with the playwrights. Nevertheless, we regret that we did Alasdair Milne less than justice, and welcome the fact that over the past few months Alasdair Milne and an increasing number of senior BBC executives have, in fact, begun to speak out about matters of policy.

MELVYN BRAGG

London TONY CASH

Max Beloff & Anti-Semitism

MAX BELOFF'S stimulating article "The Anti-Semitic Persuasion", (ENCOUNTER, August) is a *tour de force* of sane and balanced argument. Few people would, I imagine, argue with his evocation of the ambiguities of Jewish identity and allegiance which continue to pose problems even in liberal Western countries such as Britain, France, Italy and America. It was all the more surprising, therefore, to find Professor Beloff concluding his article with the assertion that

> "the claim to be a people and not just a sect means that anti-Semitism is inherent in its environment—Christian, or Muslim, or Marxist."

This seems to me to beg as many questions as it answers and to lead to consequences that I doubt Professor Beloff either intended or would approve.

If anti-Semitism is indeed rooted in Christian, Islamic and Marxist societies then it would seem to me that this is grounded in the mistaken premises underlying the Emancipation of the Jews. The Emancipation, both in Europe and subsequently in the Communist world (though not in America), failed to develop a pluralistic concept of society which recognised the Jews as a group with their own distinct cultural and religious tradition, who could make their own contribution to the new society. Instead, the Emancipators assumed, quite unrealistically, that the Jews would be submerged within society and automatically disappear as a group. This expectation was not fulfilled, and its failure coincided with the rise of modern anti-Semitism as a counter-movement to the Emancipation.

The essence of the new anti-Semitism, while it built on older anti-Jewish stereotypes derived from Christian (and Islamic) hostility to Judaism, was its attack on the *equal* status of Jews as individual members of society and as a group.

IN THE MODERN PERIOD it was not so much the Jewish claim to be a "people" which aroused antagonism as the denial of this claim and the rapidity with which Jews successfully entered and penetrated non-Jewish society. Modern anti-Semitism concentrated its fire against the whole principle of Emancipation and assimilation—against Jews who claimed to constitute no more than a "sect" as well as against those who had gone furthest in their attempts to throw off or abandon a specifically Jewish identity. Even baptised Jews were not exempt from this assault. The characteristic of this type of racial anti-Semitism, which culminated in the Holocaust, is that it allowed *no escape* from Jewishness.

If we turn to post-Holocaust anti-Semitism, we see an apparent inversion of this attitude which lends more credence to Professor Beloff's assertion. Since the creation of Israel (and the subsequent re-definition of Jewish identity in the Diaspora) it is indeed the concept of "a Jewish people" which has come under fire. The negative stereotypes which were previously directed against the equal status of Jews as members of society are now focused on its collective representation in the world of nations—i.e. the State of Israel. The full significance of this metamorphosis can only be understood from a global rather than a Eurocentric perspective. In the first instance, it is the Arab political and intellectual élites who have deliberately disseminated a systematic anti-Jewish ideology as a weapon in their struggle against Israel. Their hostility to the Jewish State has been so strong that most Arab régimes have been unable to maintain even the theoretical distinction that can be drawn between Zionism and Judaism.

The Arab anti-Zionist mask has permitted anti-Semitic and neo-fascist circles in the West to revive such hoary mythologies as the "world Jewish conspiracy" and give them a new form and content. The Far Right seeks to rehabilitate itself by denying that the Holocaust ever happened (it was all a gigantic hoax to secure West German reparations for Israel!). The extreme Left prefers to treat any reference to the Holocaust as a form of moral blackmail exerted by Israel to justify its policies towards the Palestinians. What is curious about this new type of anti-Semitism is that it denies its own essence—it is actually ashamed of being called anti-Jewish! It prefers to define *politicide*, i.e. the destruction of Israel, as an anti-racialist act.

IT SHOULD BE APPARENT to any unbiased observer that this contemporary anti-Semitism, for all its semantic coyness, is essentially political in character. This is as true of the USSR and the East European régimes as it is of the Arab States, and in both cases it has served domestic as well as foreign policy needs. "Anti-Zionism" has been manipulated and used here essentially as a tool of government policy which has proved effective in so far as it diverts and channels popular frustrations against a traditional scapegoat.

The combined power of the Communist and Arab blocs is such that anti-Semitic stereotypes have become

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widely accepted even in countries of the Third World, where no Jewish population (let alone a "Jewish question") exists. One thinks of the ravings of the unlamented Idi Amin Dada, of Colonel Qadhafi's query as to whether President Sadat might not be a "Jew", and the ritual condemnations of Israel as a pariah nation at various Third World venues (most recently in Havana). No doubt the barrage of anti-Semitic propaganda from Moscow and the power of Arab petro-dollars have done much to fuel this resurrection of an ideology whose consequences nearly destroyed European civilisation. But as long as there are circles who place their apocalyptic hopes in the exacerbation of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Neo-anti-Semitism is likely to be with us, and its fall-out will remain an integral part of the wider threat to the values of Western democracy.

ROBERT WISTRICH

London

Why Finland is Free

IN the notes on Finland by Melvin J. Lasky [ENCOUNTER, August] the question was raised as to why Finland was not fused into the Soviet Union after the War. An adequate answer was not found.

Perhaps the real answer lies in the fact that Finland was not occupied. Finland had made an armistice with the USSR, and later peace in 1944. That is, in my view, why Finland is an autonomous country.

It should be remembered that all, except three, of the great European capital cities involved in World War II were occupied or conquered. The three were: London, Moscow and Helsinki.

JUHANI RIIHIMÄKI

Tampere
Finland

Prince Mirsky

I HAVE ONLY just read in your January number Leo Labedz's "Isaac Deutscher's 'Stalin'", and I was very glad you encouraged him to publish, after so many years, the sequel to his first article. It's better to have the truth late than never. I began reading Deutscher years ago, but could not go on: I simply did not trust him. I did not know how unreliable, historically, he was—as Labedz shows.

I was born in Russia, and spent my first 19 years there: formative years. There was so much light and darkness in Russian life (and I've tried to reflect them both in my novel *The Fertile Plain*). I was five when I saw through the window men and women fighting: it was the Revolution of 1905. I was 11 when Beilis was arrested, accused of having murdered a Christian boy to use his blood for Passover cakes. A mathematics teacher from a gymnasium tried, in my presence, to convince a neighbour of ours—a remarkable woman—not only *why* but *how* Jews murder Christian boys (they both knew that I was Jewish). The daughter of that teacher was a good friend of mine—she came one evening to tell me that she did not believe in ritual murder, nor did her mother: her mother had once been my teacher, and was very kind to me. The ritual murder case dragged on for some two years, and then Beilis was acquitted by a peasant jury! I was thirteen when Archbishop Anthony came from Kiev to talk to the schools: in my gymnasium he spent most of his time telling us that Tolstoy was burning in hell, but that Jews could go to heaven: all they needed was to become Christians. By coincidence our teacher of Russian was just then reading us Tolstoy's *Childhood*. There was no need for her to tell us how much she cared for it. There were not many professions to choose from in Russia: many of the best people went into teaching. Our teachers' human weight and influence on me was great.

Labedz writes of Prince Mirsky. I had once a battle with Mirsky. I had heard quite a lot about him from the Cornfords who were great friends of Jane Harrison whom Mirsky knew and admired,[1] and from Charles and Brenda Seligman, the anthropologists, with whom Mirsky stayed. One day I had a letter from Frances Cornford asking my husband and me to come to Cambridge and hear Prince Mirsky talk on "Dialectical Materialism". I was in late pregnancy but still we went. It was the end of November 1931, a Sunday evening. We knew a good many people in the audience: Desmond Bernal and J. B. S. Haldane, in the front; behind us was Herbert Butterfield, the historian. Mirsky talked of "the collapse of capitalism", the "end of Western bourgeois civilisation". I was getting angrier and angrier. People in the Western world talk of "disinformation": I don't know who invented the word, but the substance is very old, and not invented by the *KGB*. In George Katkov's book *Russia 1917* you will find that in *Czarist* Russian ruling circles a great deal of "disinformation" went on: it was known as "*vrat*": not straightforward lying but a complex fabric of untruths. I had experienced it at school between the ages of 11–14: a most remarkable art of distorting truth in which I myself used to take part. *"Vrat"* usually had a purpose: among us girls it was fed by love and jealousy. Now Mirsky was disinforming us; but I did not know at the time that he was driven by a desire to go back to Russia. Bernal got up and mumbled complete agreement on Dialectical Materialism. Butterfield asked some pointed questions. Before I tell you how I exploded, I'll quote a letter from Frances Cornford to her son John from a book of his selected writings and of her letters (Carcanet New Press, 1976, p.143): "We heard Prince Mirsky last Sunday on Dialectical Materialism.... But Esther made much the best speech and Dada asked much the best question, which really drew him." What I remember telling him is that I could not understand his coming to Cambridge without knowing, as he admitted, anything about science, and talking about the death of this civilisation, when remarkable things were being discovered here in so many fields. I also told Mirsky that

[1] Jessie Stewart, in her *Jane Ellen Harrison* (Merlin Press, 1959), refers to Mirsky's lecture given in 1930 at Newnham College. She records how Jane Harrison got Mirsky (her "very learned Bear Prince") to contribute an historical introduction to her translation of the "Life of Arch-Priest Avakkum by Himself"; Avakkum was an "Old Believer" who suffered at the stake in 1681, and Mirsky's own ancestors were among those persecuted for their beliefs at that time. Mirsky sent the book to Russia for review: it was returned marked "forbidden". Mirsky had also praised Isaac Babel in his history of Russian Literature. These two "crimes" must have contributed to his destruction when he returned to Russia. Many lost their lives for less.

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the Bolsheviks had ruined "our revolution": by introducing an alien philosophy irrelevant to Russia. I had not forgotten our hope of a free Russia after the Revolution of February 1917, which the Bolsheviks crushed by closing the Constituent Assembly and putting an armed guard outside when they found themselves in the minority. And the slogans!—"Dictatorship of the Proletariat" when there was no proletariat—"Class war, when there were no classes in Marx's sense.

When there were no more questions Mirsky got up, and made his replies. At the end he said: "As for the lady's criticism, it's not a matter for argument but for pistols. . . ."

LABEDZ QUOTES many interesting things, among them the effect Mirsky had on David Wilson, an "ordinary Labour man" according to the *New Left Review* which published extracts from Wilson's autobiography: *pathetic when we think of Mirsky's fate.* Well before Malcolm Muggeridge published *Chronicles of Wasted Time* (1973), I heard from S. S. Koteliansky that Mirsky had perished in one of Stalin's forced labour camps.

Labedz recalls a remark of Luciani's (*Le Temps* Correspondent) that Mirsky managed to be "a parasite under three régimes—as a Prince under Czarism, as a Professor under Capitalism, and as an *homme-de-lettres* under Communism. . . ." Luciani shows little understanding of Russians. It was harder for a Russian to sustain life outside his country than for a German or an Englishman. (Vladimir Nabokov flatly refused even to visit Russia; but he was a remarkable writer, and he had a good wife.) Mirsky was no genius: if he had stayed here we might by now have an interesting biography of this man. He was never a parasite. Let me end by what Koteliansky said about him when he heard of the battle I had with Mirsky in Cambridge. He had given me Mirsky's little book on *Lenin*: "Rotten", he said; "he was prepared to tell any number of lies, to humiliate himself to any extent, just to be allowed to return to Russia: he needed not anger but our prayers. . . ." An unbeliever, Koteliansky (like Einstein) was in the habit of invoking God.

ESTHER SALAMAN

London

Goldovsky & Koussevitsky

I READ with particular interest Boris Goldovsky's article in the May ENCOUNTER. Perhaps I can add a little to what he says about Koussevitsky.

Koussevitsky was hired to conduct the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1924. My father was then one of the orchestra's trustees. Since he went each spring to Paris anyway (to talk with his clients), he offered to transmit the invitation of the trustees. Koussevitsky accepted it and arrived in Boston that summer. His luggage had been misplaced. Hence he spent his first night in America sleeping in my father's pajamas and enjoying the sea that lay around our house.

They became lifelong friends. My father was one of the two founders of *Le Club des Arts Gastronomiques*; the other was Russell Sturgis Codman, who is still alive and well. (My father died thirty-one years ago.) Russell Codman wrote *Vintage Dinners* which was privately printed in 1937—in the back are thirty-three pages of the menus of dinners given by the twelve members. The first menu is for a dinner given to celebrate the eleventh anniversary of Dr Serge Koussevitsky as conductor and the investiture of a new member, Professor Samuel Eliot Morison (who had not yet become so famous as an historian).

I used to see him occasionally at my father's house. He was exactly as portrayed by Boris Goldovsky. I can supplement the portrait with an anecdote. In the summer of 1938 (when I was 15) I was planning a trip to Finland with my mother. I intensely admired the music of Sibelius, and asked "Koussie" if he would give me a letter of introduction. He refused. Stokowski, he said, had tried to meet Sibelius the summer before and been rebuffed. "Koussie" did not want to jeopardise his relations with Sibelius by sending him a mere boy. During our talk I asked "Koussie" where the Eighth Symphony was. He shrugged his shoulders and said: *"Wheesky."* (In point of fact I do not think Sibelius was an alcoholic.) As it turned out I went quite by chance to have tea with Sibelius at his house in Järvenpää. I was taken by a schoolmate of his who was head of the Finnish Travel Bureau. As soon as I got back to the hotel in Helsingfors, I wrote pages of notes on our conversation (still somewhere in my attic).

I am sorry that Goldovsky did not mention Rosamund Brooks (married to a cousin of Brooks and Henry Adams) in connection with Tanglewood. The Berkshire Festivals in their present form were her idea. From her Sturgis grandparents she had inherited the house and grounds, and she gave them to the orchestra in 1937 so that music festivals might be held there. My father was her trustee, handling the legal details. This was the house in which Hawthorne wrote *Tanglewood Tales*.

HOLMES WELCH

Harvard University
Cambridge, Mass

Mishima's Death

D. J. Enright's "Death is Good for You" (ENCOUNTER, September) states that there was one decency in Yukio Mishima's death: "he took no innocent bystanders with him."

I refer you to Henry Scott Stokes' excellent biography where the blood-curdling account of Mishima's last day clearly implies the element of luck in his only wounding one general and three colonels, rather than sabring right through them.

GILBERT DE BOTTON

Zurich

John Clare

I AM preparing an edition of the *Letters of John Clare* for Oxford University Press; I would be very grateful to have details of any letters to or from Clare, in private hands or small collections.

MARK STOREY

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London

KIDNAPPED: **Prosecuting counsel Mr Roy Anlott: "Miss Mills, how do you feel about kidnapping people?"**

Iris Mills, one of the defendants in the continuing Anarchist trial at the Old Bailey: "I am opposed to it. After all, it's happened to me twice—once when I was arrested in Huddersfield, and again when I was arrested last year."

Judge Alan King-Hamilton, looking somewhat shocked at the figure in the box: "But you weren't kidnapped, you were arrested under the due process of law."

THE OBSERVER

London

FATAL SEQUENCE: *Ralph Steadman quotes Freud's remark:*

"What progress we are making! In the Middle Ages they would have burned me. Nowadays they are content with burning my books."

Actually, but for the sheer accident that Freud managed to escape in time, "they" would have burnt him too (at Auschwitz). For the truth is, as Heinrich Heine, the German Jewish writer, noted with greater perception 100 years before Freud, where men burn books, it won't be long before they burn human beings.

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

London

DEFINITIONS: *Ridley Scott has hit the jackpot. "Alien", the film which he made in England, has scared America witless this summer and is doing a roaring business in Britain. It shows what happens when a creature reproduces itself in hideous forms in the body of a crewman aboard a space craft and seeks to take over the whole ship.*

In America there have been learned discussions about the sexual implications of the carryings-on aboard the spaceship in "Alien." The computer is called Mother, for instance. When our heroine is attacked by Ian Holm he tries to stuff a girly magazine down her throat.

One learned observer called the film "a long non-sexist rape."

Ridley Scott shook his head when I showed him the comment. "It is a load of intellectual cobblers", he said. "What is non-sexist rape anyway?"

DAILY MAIL

London

RUDYARD HUMOUR: *A huge display of billowing skirts, red roses, overdeveloped anatomies and Scotsmen's kilts, goes on display today at the Langton Gallery in Chelsea, where they are mounting an exhibition of the work of postcard artist Donald McGill.*

Made respectable by George Orwell's famous essay of 1941, the "dirty postcards" have attracted increasing attention over the years.

There are 64 original watercolours priced from about £75, and several postcards on display including the one which has apparently sold best of all. This depicts a courting couple under a tree with the caption: "He: 'Do you like Kipling?' She: 'I don't know, you naughty boy, I've never kippled'."

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Paris

SMELL: **Emperor Vespasian's "Pecunia non olet" (money has no smell) has passed into the French language as "l'argent n'a pas d'odeur." In Paris many years ago Houbigant, the perfume company, was declared insolvent and called in a receiver.**

The next morning the Paris daily "Le Matin" printed its front page headline in big characters "L'odeur n'a pas d'argent (Smell has no money)."

EVENING STANDARD

Johannesburg

ENTITLED: *South African playgoers will not see all of the popular Broadway musical "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas," but at least the censors are going to let them read the full title.*

In a reversal of an earlier decision, the Publications Appeal Board yesterday told the producers they could use the play's full name instead of describing it as "The Best Little ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ in Texas."

It was a mixed victory for producers. For in allowing the full title, the board removed three of the censor's previous cuts, then added five additional ones of their own.

UNITED PRESS

London/Peking

PRIVACY: **There are great and obvious differences between the Anglo-Saxon way of life [Claire Hollingworth writes] on the subject of love and sex and the boundaries between public and private life in China—it is worth noting that the language has no word for privacy. Indeed, my Chinese interpreter in Peking saw nothing odd in reading my personal letters or trying to study the intricacies of my English bank statements.**

DAILY TELEGRAPH

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AUTHORS

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala was awarded the 1975 Booker Prize for her novel *Heat and Dust*. Her publishers, John Murray, brought out in 1976 her latest volume of short stories, *How I Became a Holy Mother* (the title story appeared in the February 1976 issue of ENCOUNTER), and in 1978 re-issued three of her earlier novels. She has over the last few years turned to writing film scripts—*Hullabaloo over Georgie's and Bonnie's Pictures, Roseland, The Europeans*, etc.—for Merchant-Ivory Productions.

Louis de Jong's account of the *Englandspiel* was translated by Arnold Pomerans.

Raymond Aron, the French political philosopher, teacher, and journalist, is a Member of the Académie des Sciences morales et politiques, and Professor of the Collège de France. ENCOUNTER has published many of his analyses, including (September–October 1977) "My Defence of Our Decadent Europe" and (August 1979) "From Yankee Imperialism to Russian Hegemony?". His article in this issue originally appeared in *L'Express*.

Edwin Brock's most recent book of poems is *The River and the Train* (Secker & Warburg, 1979).

Edward Lowbury's *Selected Poems* were published by Celtion in 1979.

Peter Porter's *The Cost of Seriousness* (Oxford University Press) was a Poetry Book Society Choice in 1978.

Samuel Brittan is economic commentator of the *Financial Times*, and author of *Capitalism and the Permissive Society* (Macmillan, 1973), *Second Thoughts on Full Employment* (Barrie Rose, 1975), and *The Economic Consequences of Democracy* (Temple Smith, 1977). His articles in ENCOUNTER include "The Rebirth of Political Economy" (May 1973) and "Between Leviathan and the Jungle" (April 1976).

Arnold Wesker, whose plays—*The Kitchen, Chips With Everything*, and the trilogy *Chicken Soup with Barley, Roots*, and *I'm Talking About Jerusalem*—aroused such interest in the late '50s and early '60s, has more recently written *Journey into Journalism* (Writers & Readers Publishing Cooperative, 1977) and a novel, *Said the Old Man to the Young Man* (Cape, 1978).

Tom Paulin is a Lecturer in English at the University of Nottingham and author of *Thomas Hardy: The Poetry of Perception* (Macmillan, 1976) and a book of poems, *A State of Justice* (Faber, 1977).

Alan Brownjohn's volume of poems *A Song of Good Life* was published by Secker & Warburg in 1975.

D. J. Enright, poet, literary critic, and novelist, has held various chairs of English Literature abroad. He was from 1970–72 co-editor of ENCOUNTER, and is now a director of Chatto & Windus, who published in 1978 his volume of poems, *Paradise Illustrated*. His latest book of poems (Oxford University Press, 1979) is entitled *A Faust Book*.

Gerd Ruge was from 1973–78 Chief Correspondent for *Die Welt* in Peking; since then he has been Moscow correspondent of the German television network *ARD*. (His earlier years in Russia (1960–64) brought him friendship with Pasternak, and difficulties with the authorities.) His book on China was published in 1978, and his "Conversations in Moscow" in ENCOUNTER, October 1958.

John Beloff is Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Edinburgh, and author of *The Existence of Mind* (1962) and *Psychological Sciences* (Crosby Lockwood Staples, 1973).

The cartoon on p.24 is by **Fritz Behrendt**, a well-known Dutch caricaturist. It is included in a volume of his drawings, *Haben Sie Marx Gesehen?*, published by Molden Verlag in Vienna.

Wei Jingsheng, one of the leaders of the recent "Democracy Movement" in Peking, discussed the origins, achievements, and failure of that campaign in his essay "The Fifth Modernisation: Democracy", which appeared in the November issue of ENCOUNTER.

Nigel Wade, Correspondent in Peking for *The Daily Telegraph*, wrote of Wei:

> "How did a man who was born one year after the Chinese Communists came to power, whose father forced him to memorise Communist texts from the age of 12, who was a Red Guard in the Cultural Revolution and a soldier for four years, develop such an articulate analysis of the system under which he was raised? . . . What made him a dissident? The combination of an impressive native intellect and first-hand exposure . . . to the sufferings of ordinary people under the communist dictatorship."

As we were going to press, news came that Wei had been sentenced to 15 years imprisonment. As Simon Leys said in his accompanying article, the ghosts of "the Gang of Four" still have their influence in China, and radical questioning of Communist doctrine is as impermissible as it was in the past.

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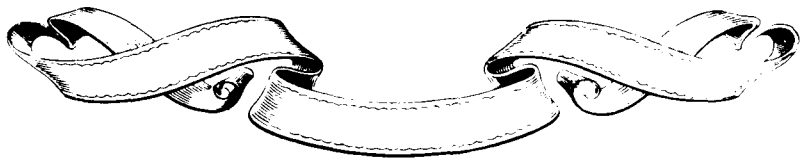

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